

Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 28

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Originally published by Bright Star Publishing plc
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

Originally produced by Midsummer Books Ltd
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

This e-edition produced by
www.hitlersthirdreich.co.uk

HITLER'S

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ISSN 1464-1968



9 771464 196011

UK £2.95

IR £3.25

New Zealand \$9.95

South Africa R24.95

Singapore \$7.95

Malaysia Rg 17.95

Malta Lm 1.95

HITLER'S Third Reich

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Our thanks to Ulric of England
(PO Box 55, Church Stretton,
Shropshire SY6 6WR)
for allowing us to photograph items
from his extensive collection.

Picture acknowledgments

Cover: Aerospace Publishing **1:** Aerospace; **2:** AKG London; **3-5:** Aerospace; **6-9:** Aerospace; **10:** AKG; **11:** Suddeutscher Verlag;
12: Topham Picturepoint, Popperfoto, Suddeutscher (2); **13:** Suddeutscher (2), Aerospace; **14:** Aerospace (2); **15:** Suddeutscher (3);
16: James Baker, courtesy US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Donald S. Robinson/USHMM; **17:** Stuart Denenberg/USHMM;
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25: Aerospace (3); **26:** Topham, National Archives, AKG; **26-32:** Aerospace; **33:** Aerospace (2), Suddeutscher; **34-39:** Aerospace;
40-43: Aerospace; **44-48:** Aerospace.

Published monthly by
Bright Star Publishing plc
179, Dalling Road
London W6 0ES
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Colour reproduction by
Catalyst Publishing, Leamington Spa

Printed in Italy by Officine Grafiche De Agostini

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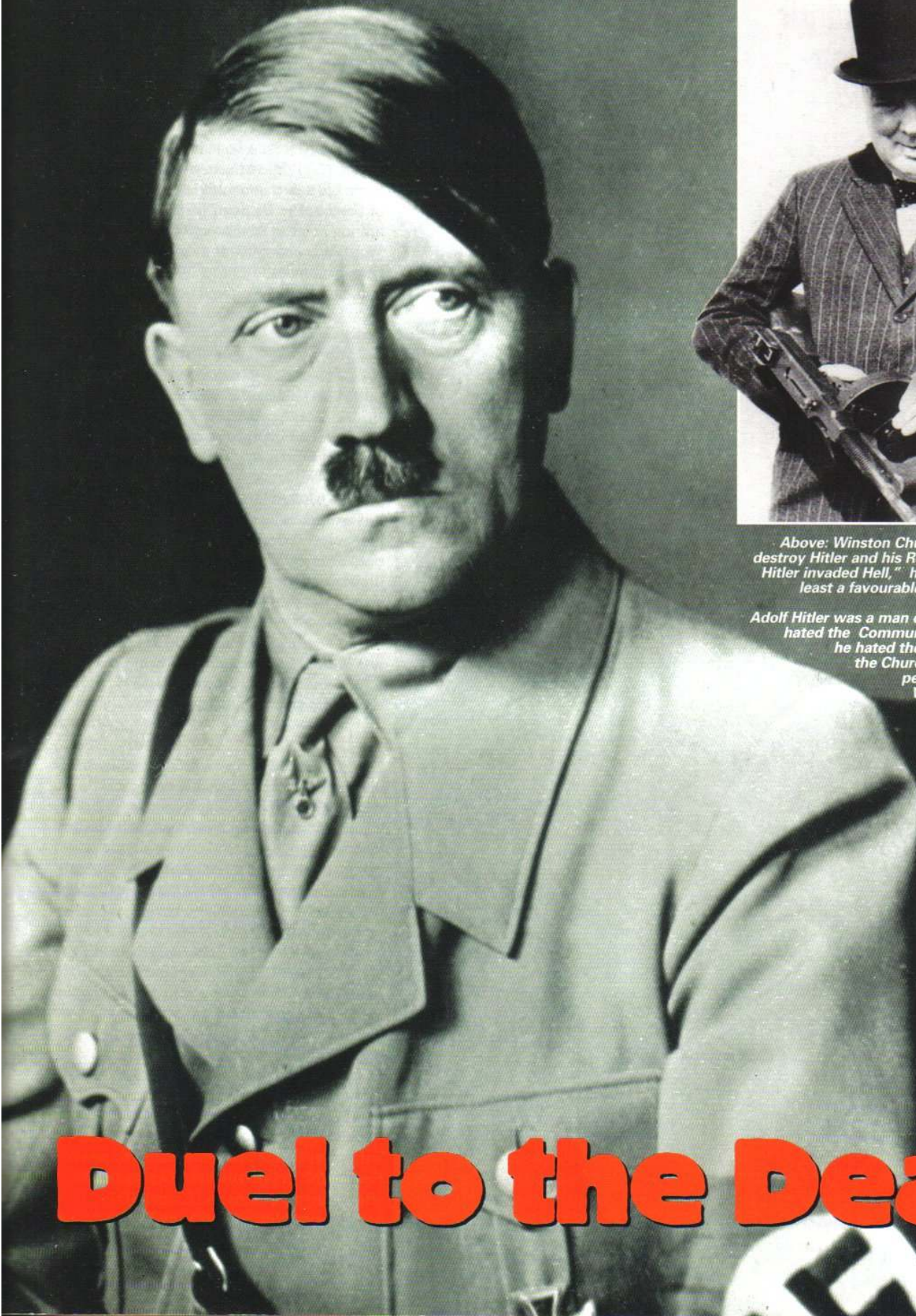
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scription Services)

ISSN 1464-1976 (with video)
ISSN 1464-1968 (without video)

Hitler and Churchill



Above: Winston Churchill's determination to destroy Hitler and his Reich was unswerving. "If Hitler invaded Hell," he said, "I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil."

Adolf Hitler was a man consumed by hatred. He hated the Communists, he hated the Jews, he hated the Prussians and he hated the Church. But high on his list of people to be despised was Winston Churchill, a man whom Hitler's radio broadcasters described as a 'filthy liar' and a 'puffed-up pig'.

Duel to the Death



In the summer of 1940, two charismatic and implacable war leaders faced each other across the Channel, starting a duel which would last to the end of the war.

HITLER NEVER WANTED war with Britain. He was prepared to go to the brink in order to extract concessions, as he did at Munich. He accepted the possibility of another Anglo-German conflict, yet whereas he dedicated his life to the destruction of Communist Russia and eagerly awaited a settling of accounts with France, he had no desire to dismember the British Empire. If anything, he regarded the Empire as a bulwark of Aryan rule across vast reaches of Africa and Asia. His view of British rule in India formed the model for his intended German empire in Russia.

Surprised by Britain's declaration of war over Poland, Hitler sent his armies into the West on 10 May 1940. His generals assumed the campaign would last for more than 12 months; the young panzer commanders hoped their Blitzkrieg methods would produce a quicker result. No-one anticipated victory in six weeks.

In the glow of victory in 1945 and for years afterwards, no-one in Britain questioned Prime Minister Winston Churchill's decision to fight on after the fall of France. The Battle of Britain was both a turning point in the history of the Second World War and remains a defining moment in British attitudes to Europe. What was Hitler thinking, when he offered peace in June 1940? Was he so ignorant of Britain and the British people?

Hitler's knowledge of Britain was poor, likewise that of his armed forces – he and the Luftwaffe remained in blissful ignorance of British aircraft production figures. Yet in recent years his peace offer has received new attention from historians no longer in awe of the Churchillian legend. Before addressing the role Churchill played in Hitler's downfall, it is worth noting that on the balance of probability, Winston Churchill should have been dead by May 1940. He survived several life-threatening bouts of pneumonia that could have seen him buried before the war, and no doubt would have been remembered as another failed politician like his father. It was Hitler's bad luck, and the world's good fortune that Churchill's formidable constitution saw him through.

FANTASY AND REALITY

Hitler first showed his leadership ability in playground recreations of the Boer War, in which the Boers were the 'goodies'. Churchill first achieved international fame in the real thing, by escaping from a Boer prison camp after being captured during the ambush of an armoured train. By then a journalist, he had already seen action as a cavalry subaltern on the north-west frontier of India, and had charged with the 21st Lancers at the battle of Omdurman in 1899. He went into politics in his late twenties, rising with meteoric speed to become First Lord of the Admiralty by 1914. He fell with equal rapidity after the Gallipoli campaign, which he had championed in the teeth of service opposition, deteriorated into bloody stalemate.

Churchill was consigned to the political wilderness by the time Hitler came to power. Few British politicians have ever survived after changing parties and Churchill handicapped himself further by his vociferous

Right: Winston Churchill survived medical crises and years in the political wilderness to become one of England's most revered leaders. His absolute refusal to negotiate after the Nazi conquest of France reflected his determination to crush Hitler and his army.





loyalty to Edward VIII during and after the constitutional crisis that saw the king toppled in favour of his brother in 1936. Churchill's view of Hitler and Germany was equally unfashionable. Appeasement was not just the policy of Britain's political elite, it enjoyed widespread support among the electorate. Nevertheless, aided by a band of backbench supporters and various military contacts, Churchill waged a war of attrition inside and outside parliament. By the late 1930s when Britain began to re-arm, he had been vindicated. Hitler gained a great deal by his brinkmanship, but was now popularly regarded as untrustworthy. But so was Churchill.

ROGUE POLITICIAN

Once a Conservative, then a Liberal, now a Tory again, the party hierarchy saw him as a rogue elephant and dreaded what he might do if installed in Downing Street. This was the man who had presided over the defeat at Antwerp in 1914, the Gallipoli fiasco and who had wanted heavy cruisers to shell Dublin during the Irish rebellion.

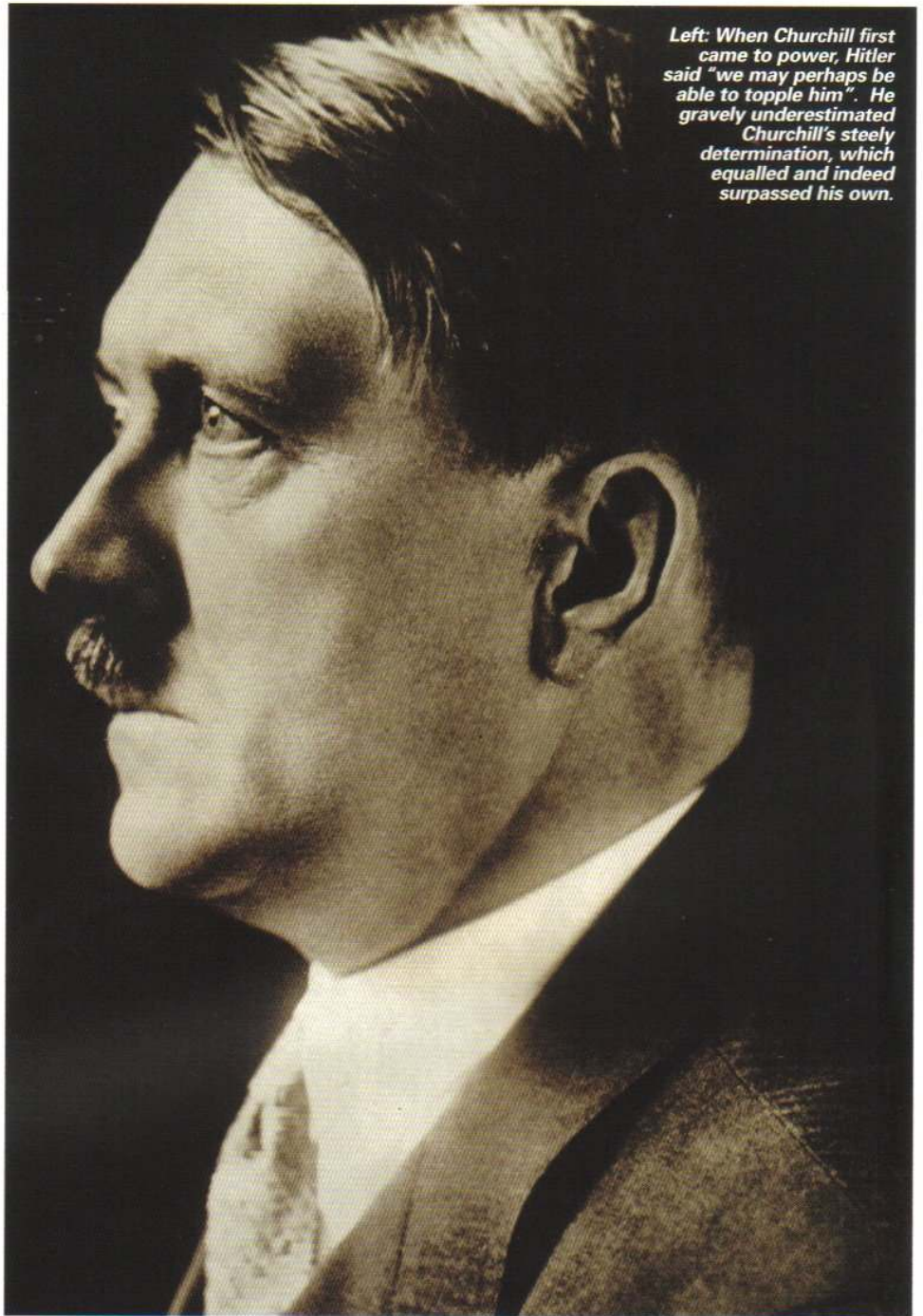
Churchill became prime minister the day Hitler unleashed his offensive in the west. Neville Chamberlain was hounded from the commons in an acrimonious debate called to discuss the debacle in Norway — ironically, an operation for which Churchill (once again First Lord of the Admiralty) deserved much of the blame. Chamberlain's chosen successor was his foreign secretary, Lord Halifax. He stood aside in favour of Churchill, sensing he was not up to the job — or perhaps that the time was not right. Few people, even Churchill's supporters, believed Churchill would last long in Number 10.

Within weeks, the British Army was poised to evacuate from France. The cabinet discussed whether to initiate peace talks, Halifax urging his colleagues to negotiate via Mussolini. Churchill squashed all talk of compromise, spitting defiance in words that still send shivers down the spine at this distance. "If this long island story of ours is to end at last," he said, "let it be only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground". He later went on radio to the same effect.

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

When invasion loomed, Churchill prepared to move to his equivalent of the 1945 Führerbunker: an underground communications centre in Neasden, north London. There is little doubting his intention to make a personal last stand with his own gun collection.

Churchill was a far more ruthless war



Left: When Churchill first came to power, Hitler said "we may perhaps be able to topple him". He gravely underestimated Churchill's steely determination, which equalled and indeed surpassed his own.

leader than Hitler in 1940. The German people were not subject to serious rationing for another two years; the economy remained geared to 'guns and butter' as consumer goods production dipped by only 2% from 1939. The British had to get used to 'blood, toil, tears and sweat' — sustained by carrot cake, powdered eggs and recipes that made British cuisine an oxymoron for 50 years.

Churchill himself was half-American. He appreciated that unless the USA intervened, there was little prospect of defeating Germany. Memories of Russia's collapse in

the First World War, and her desertion of the wartime alliance, were still fresh. And Churchill had been the most ardent hawk in 1919-20, despatching British forces to crush the Bolshevik revolution.

Churchill initiated what became a warm correspondence with President Roosevelt, who had won the 1940 election on a pledge not to get involved in the war. It was with American public opinion at the back of his mind that Churchill ordered the most notorious British act of the Second World War: the attack on the French navy in its



Above: As the war went on and Germany's defeat seemed inevitable, Hitler became increasingly isolated from reality. Convinced of his own infallibility, he rejected the advice of his Generals which might have changed the fortunes of Germany.

Below: Unlike Hitler, Churchill listened to his Generals more often than not, and allowed them to advise him on strategy. His record in French Algeria proved he could be ruthless, but he remained rational and diligent in the pursuit of ultimate victory.



North African ports. British admirals, on the threshold of achieving a compromise deal with their French counterparts, were ordered to stop talking and start shooting. Only in Alexandria were the French overcome without bloodshed. In French Algeria the result was a slaughter, with over 1,500 Frenchmen killed. Such ruthless duplicity demonstrated Britain would stop at nothing. It also, coincidentally, wedded Churchill's wartime cabinet to their new leader.

By the autumn of 1940 there was no longer any prospect of Halifax and his supporters replacing Churchill with a cabinet prepared to deal with Hitler. There was no serious opposition to Churchill for another 18 months, and even then, the Commons vote of censure in June 1942 was beaten by 475 votes to 25 (with 40 abstentions). The fall of Singapore had been followed by another round of defeats in North Africa, culminating in the loss of Tobruk.

As a war leader, Churchill could be as quixotic as Hitler, insisting for example on the eve of D-Day that alternative plans be prepared for a landing in Norway. He shrank from the Normandy landings, cunningly side-tracking the US Army into North Africa in 1942 and Italy in 1943. American enthusiasm for a cross-Channel assault in 1943, timed to coincide with the battle of Kursk, might have brought the war to a victorious conclusion earlier. But Churchill (and most of his generals) had fought as an infantryman in the trenches of Flanders during the First World War. They knew, as the Red Army had since discovered, that there was no cheap way to eject the German army from a position it was determined to hold. They doubted whether Britain or the Commonwealth nations could pay that price a second time in a generation.

STUBBORN, BUT PERSUADEABLE

Churchill's great strength was that he gave in to his generals, if not always gracefully. "You have to have a bloody good row with Winston once a month" Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke confided to a colleague. By contrast, Hitler attempted to micro-manage the war, to the extent that by 1944 he denied his commanders any genuine freedom of action. Both Churchill and Hitler were night-owls, but whereas Hitler remained the dilettante dictator, Churchill had a prodigious capacity for actual work. Both were orators of genius, although it came much harder to Churchill than to the intuitive Hitler. Churchill rehearsed his performances with meticulous attention to his words, believing, with some justification, that a ten minute 'impromptu' after dinner speech requires at least eight hours' preparation. Hitler practiced as well, but his great addresses were a heady mixture of scripting and improvisation based on his uncanny ability to sense the mood of his audience.

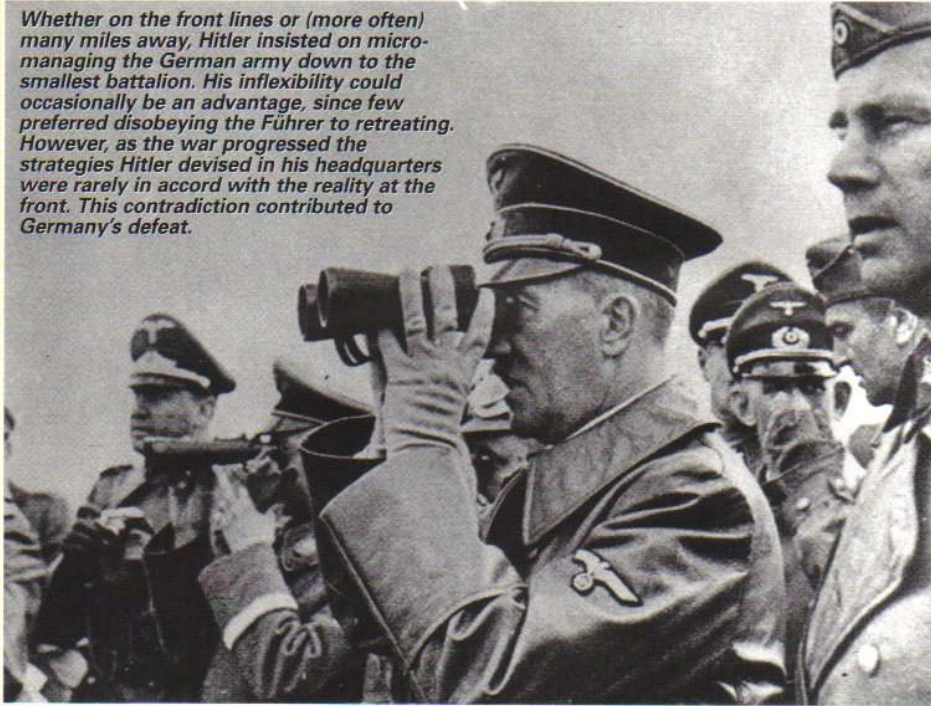
NO SURRENDER

Without Churchill to take charge in May 1940, there seems every reason to believe that a compromise peace could have been achieved between Britain and Germany. The Führer was in a hurry to attack Russia and had no plans to destroy the British Empire – for the moment. Having survived the summer of 1940 and the Battle of Britain, Churchill worked to get America into the war. By late 1941 he and Roosevelt had brought the US Navy to a de facto war in the North Atlantic. Hitler was so angered by this that he thought nothing of declaring war on the USA in the wake of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor – a decision which would cost Germany the war.



WAR LEADERS

Whether on the front lines or (more often) many miles away, Hitler insisted on micro-managing the German army down to the smallest battalion. His inflexibility could occasionally be an advantage, since few preferred disobeying the Führer to retreating. However, as the war progressed the strategies Hitler devised in his headquarters were rarely in accord with the reality at the front. This contradiction contributed to Germany's defeat.



Below: Churchill could also be dogmatic, and occasionally developed fixations about pet strategies, but he argued with his Generals only over major decisions. He recognised that those at the front were in a better position to instruct their troops and did not interfere.

Right: At Compiègne, Hitler celebrates his triumph against the despised French. The Wehrmacht's victory in 1940 made him master of Western Europe, and convinced him of both his own genius and the validity of his 'hands-on' approach to strategy.



The German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 was expected to be a walk-over, and early triumphs indicated that the Wehrmacht's planners were right. But the onset of the Russian winter found the invaders woefully unprepared for the severity of the climate, and what had been a succession of smashing victories turned into a fight for survival.



War against Winter

Anyone fighting in Russia has to remember one thing: the major adversary for a third of the year is not the enemy. It is the Russian winter.

MAN FOR MAN, the German soldier was the most efficient of World War II, and the men of the Waffen SS were, in the early days at least, the toughest of them all. A rigorous selection process ensured that SS recruits were supremely fit, and their almost religious belief in Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party drove them to efforts that other, less motivated, soldiers

could not match. They were just as fanatical as their Japanese counterparts but, unlike the Japanese, not suicidally so.

Such drive, allied to a natural German bent for soldiering, saw the SS taking a prominent part in the early German victories. There was a downside, of course; fanaticism can easily be misdirected, and in the Third Reich there were plenty of evil characters who used the SS to further their own demonic beliefs. While some units

remained hard but fair, there were as many others guilty of the worst of atrocities.

NO MERCY

The most difficult campaign for the SS and the German army was on the Eastern Front. After the first heady summer of 1941, the war in Russia settled down to a slogging battle of attrition, neither side having much regard for the 'rules of war'. Huge armies faced each other in titanic battles like Kiev,

Stalingrad and Kursk, but in many places it was a stalemate. And for much of the year, the Russian climate was the enemy.

With Moscow burning in front of it, Napoleon's huge army of 1812 had been driven from Russia by 'General Winter'. One hundred and thirty years later the Germans encountered the same foe. The misery generated by the Russian winter's sustained sub-zero temperatures was compounded by the mud that, each autumn and spring, turned the steppe into a bottomless mire.

Waffen SS regiments were in action in the east from the start of Operation Barbarossa to the fall of Berlin, and only those

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Above: SS men gather round a fire. Although poorly equipped for the weather, German troops still managed to fight through the snow – but casualties to frostbite and exposure were appallingly high.



Right: The winter was only part of the story. Both before and after the freeze rains turned the steppes into a glutinous mass of mud; the feared Rasputitza which stopped all movement in autumn and spring.

Below: There was a great temptation to move into villages in the winter, forcing the locals out. This was dangerous, however, since such villages made easy targets for fierce Soviet air and artillery attacks.

who learned to cope with Russia's bitter tactical lessons survived to the end.

The winter is a deadlier enemy than any gun-armed opponent. Treated with contempt, it will kill you more quickly than you can imagine. Treat the cold with respect and you just might survive through to spring. Good boots are a key element to survival. The latest high-tech marvels might work well for a while, but three months in 30 degrees of frost will stretch them beyond their limits. The Germans found that old-fashioned felt boots lined with fur were by far the most effective protection for the feet.

White, waterproof clothes





For all of its advanced equipment, the Russian winter reduced the Wehrmacht to the level of Napoleon's army of 1812. The most reliable mode of transport was the horse, which also provided a food supply in emergencies.

were essential. They were worn in layers, with plenty of insulating air trapped in the gaps. The collar was natural fur: any other collars froze solid and acted like a rasp sawing into the skin of the neck.

SUSTENANCE

Food had to be able to stand the cold, but it also had to be protected from the full deep-freeze effect of 40 degrees below zero. It was not easy trying to defrost something when you had no raw materials on hand to light a fire.

Eat, even if you are not hungry. Extreme cold can suppress hunger, and if you do not eat, your reserves of body fat will get used up. You become haggard and tired, and it is very difficult to stay awake. German troops on the Eastern Front found that the only solution was to melt a pound or more of fat – butter, or cooking fat – and make the victim drink it. Under normal circumstances this would be impossible to keep down, but in extreme cold it is possible, and astonishingly

could make a man with mild exposure fit within minutes.

Normal defences are impracticable in really cold terrain. Sustained sub-zero temperatures freeze the ground as hard as iron, and it is impossible for infantrymen to dig trenches or for engineers to move enough earth to build field fortifications.

It is difficult to move large formations in winter, so the Germans did not fear large-scale attacks. Their defensive tactics were based on Hedgehogs. These were platoon, or company-sized positions, well-equipped with machine-guns and mortars. Each Hedgehog could support its neighbour.

HIDDEN ENEMIES

On calm days, the land around the position was carefully surveyed. Each unit made a thorough map of the no-man's land between positions. That way, if a sentry saw a bush opposite his position that had not been there the day before, he knew that it was likely to be a camouflaged enemy.

Ammunition was kept in separate dumps, so that one lucky hit would not disarm the hedgehog completely.

LOST MINEFIELDS

Inexperienced troops used mines in the perimeter defences, but this was not a good idea. The first snowfall covers the mines, and it is easy to lose track of them, making long minesweeping operations necessary before troops can move out on patrol.

Frontal attacks were found to be almost impossible in winter, especially in forested areas like the Taiga of northern Russia. Movement of men and machines is slowed by deep snow, and even a small forest can become impassable to tanks and armoured vehicles.

Experienced troops, especially those trained by the Finns, took the offensive by attacking enemy lines of communication, with small ski patrols laying ambushes behind the enemy lines.

Care had to be taken with identification: a Soviet soldier

in a hooded snow smock looked much the same as a similarly-equipped German. This was especially true on the Eastern Front since many Germans preferred to use crude but reliable Russian weapons in the sub-zero conditions. Passwords, regularly changed, were vital to making safe contact with other patrols on the same side.

IN THE MUD

As soon as temperatures started to rise at the end of winter, well-led units would frantically begin stocking with supplies. This is because for three or four weeks the spring thaw would turn most of European Russia into a landscape of mud.

Movement is next to impossible in the Russian mud. In World War II, light half-tracks and horse-drawn transport were the only vehicles able to cope. Marching on foot was possible, but one kilometre an hour was good going.

Adequate shelter could be provided in the towns and villages, but that was to be avoided if possible. In the words of one SS major: "That was where the enemy used to concentrate his artillery fire and air attacks. Badly led troops, no matter if they were warm and dry, would go to pieces under such continual attacks."

IMMOBILE IN MUD

The 'mud-time' had a single tactical imperative: don't move! Weeks before, as the meteorologists noted the approach of spring, every unit from the largest to the smallest would stop all movement, and begin to prepare their fortifications. Soldiers would be lectured on the best way of keeping dry – vital to prevent disabling conditions like trench foot. Not the least important of the tasks was building up stocks of green-brown paint. White winter-painted vehicles make fine targets when the weather changes, so the Germans became masters at matching paint to seasons.

Sub-zero survival

Most of the 60-year-old rules for sub-zero patrols are still applicable today.

"Always be aware that the cold can kill."

"Ensure that your wireless and compass work and are not frozen. Maintain a regular radio schedule: if one of your posts or patrols misses its call it could be in trouble, from the weather or from an enemy attack."

"Beware of snipers."

"Sleep whenever you can: a tired soldier is a bad soldier, and a bad soldier has a low life expectancy."

"Never travel alone: travelling in pairs allows you to monitor each other for the first signs of snow-blindness, exposure or frostbite."

Above right: It was impossible to dig defensive positions when the earth was frozen harder than steel, so unless trenches had been dug before the onset of the cold weather, positions had to be prepared at ground level. This made the troops vulnerable to artillery fire.

Right: Operations in cold weather are exhausting, and troops took every opportunity they could to sleep. But the danger of exposure was ever-present: unprepared, unfit troops or those in poorly-sheltered positions risked freezing to death.

Below: The only effective winter camouflage is white, but great care had to be taken in identification. One man in a white coverall looks much like another, and often the only way to tell a German from a Russian was by the equipment he was carrying.



HITLER'S THIRD REICH 9

The Nazis and the church **THE TWISTED CROSS**





“One day, we want to be in a position where only complete idiots stand in the pulpit and preach to old women”.

Adolf Hitler.

THE PRINCIPALITIES and pocket states that later came to make up Germany had been riven with religious conflict since the Reformation. The inherent religious tension did not disappear overnight when Germany was finally unified by Protestant Prussia.

German Catholics, whose heartland was in Bavaria, were in

a minority. They protected their interests by forming a political party. This PC or Centre Party gained strength and momentum following the start of the *Kulturkampf*. This was an anti-religious crusade, launched by Chancellor Bismarck, against what he rightly viewed as a serious internal threat to German nationalism.

RACIST PROPHETS

The Protestants, like the Catholic Church, were under threat in late nineteenth century Europe. The times were characterised by the advance of secularism and scientific rationalism. The challenge to the established faiths also led to a renewed interest in quirky and individual spiritual alternatives, particularly in the form of racist and pagan ideologies promoted by Richard Wagner, Felix Dahn, Julius Langbehn and Paul de Lagarde. These ‘prophets’ preached the cleansing of Christianity of its Catholic and Jewish influences.

Above: Hitler had little control over German Catholics, but he sought to dominate the Protestants through Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller.

Left: Hitler greets Müller at the 1934 Nuremberg rally. Müller, a former naval chaplain, attempted to centralise control of Germany’s 28 regional evangelical churches, but met with considerable opposition.

Jesus was transformed from a pacifist proto-socialist into a sword-wielding defender of Aryanism. The Protestant Church not only failed to provide a united front to these challenges, but even adopted some of the right-wing and racist ideas.

The German Church after WWI continued to preach a message of belligerence, even after the senseless slaughter of the ‘War to end all wars’. It also propagated a gospel of anti-Semitism. The leaders of this crusade talked most loudly in Bavaria, where the world-famous Oberammergau Passion play emphasised the role of Jews as Christ-killers.

The Church also sponsored such events as the Pilgrimage to Deggendorf, commemorating a medieval ritual-murder of a Jew, and sponsored a noxious anti-

semitic newspaper, the *Meisbacher Anzeiger*, edited by a Catholic priest.

The Nazis wanted nothing to do with the Church, even though the party’s home was also in Bavaria. Though Hitler’s message echoed the anti-Semitism and some of the *völkisch* sentiments of the Protestants, the Nazis viewed established religion as an anachronism which undermined the true Aryan spirit.

JEWISH ORIGINS

Martin Bormann concisely set out the Nazi position, saying that “National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable”. The Nazis hated the Christian faith because it was Jewish in origin and, in their opinion, riddled with money grabbing clerics.

In its anti-clericalism the Nazi



Above: Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli 1876 – 1958). Dubbed the 'German Pope', he regarded National Socialism as a lesser evil than Communism. Infamously, despite certain knowledge, he failed to condemn the genocide.



Above: Pius XI totally misread the intentions of Hitler towards the Catholics and urged his German bishops to drop their opposition to the Nazis in the 1930s.



Above and Below: Cardinal Faulhaber (above), in common with the vast majority of Roman Catholics, sought accommodation with Hitler rather than martyrdom.



Party reflected a more general discontent with established religion, which had miserably failed to come to terms with its two biggest challenges – the advance of science and an explanation for the mass slaughter of WWI.

Before the Nazi seizure of power, the SA street-fighters would chant "Storm Trooper comrades, hang the Jews and put the priests against the wall!" The message was clear. Even so, in the beginning Hitler had to move cautiously. The Nazis recognised that the time was not right to launch a full-scale assault on religion, since the Church was too deeply rooted in the nation.

NAZI FESTIVALS

Hitler began by suborning the traditional Church calendar and substituting its important dates with Nazi festivals. Rituals such as birth, death and marriage were de-Christianised. In 1938 carols and nativity plays were forbidden in the schools, and the word Christmas was replaced by 'yuletide'. The Nazis calculated that it would take another two generations before the bond between Church and people could be irrevocably broken.

Some more conservative Nazis called for the establishment of a German religion. This *Reichkirche*, which was to be led by a *Reichsbischof*, was formed out of a union of the Lutheran, Reformed and United churches and the 28 Land Churches. The self-styled German Christians, preached a racist theology thinly disguised under the liturgy.

This new teaching held that God had sanctioned the Aryan way of life, that Adolf Hitler was on a sacred mission from God, that racial mixing was immoral and that laws should be passed to stop further pollution.

In 1933 the German Christians elected Ludwig Müller as Reichs Bishop. Then the Prussian General Synod, in which the German Christians had a two-thirds majority, ratified a proposal that any future holder of a clerical office should be of Aryan

ancestry. These developments met with a storm of protest from the majority of the Evangelical Churches. They formed an alliance which became known as the Confessional Church. This movement's most famous spokesman was Pastor Martin Niemöller. Niemöller had originally been a supporter of Hitler. However he quickly saw the horrors implicit in Nazism, and became one of its most implacable foes.

Niemöller, a successful WWI submarine commander, had 'found' his faith during the inter-war years. He was much feted in Berlin where his charismatic addresses always drew large crowds of believers and non-believers alike. He correctly identified the German Christian Movement as heretical.

By October 1934 there was an open schism between the two extremes of the Evangelical Church. The German Christians enjoyed Nazi support so long as they continued to undermine Protestantism within Germany. The following year the Confessional Church took its most uncompromising stance and rejected the entire Nazi racial-völkisch Weltanschauung.

DISSIDENT CRACKDOWN

With characteristic brutality the Nazis now took direct action against individuals. Niemöller was to spend the next seven years in various concentration camps. Seven hundred ministers were arrested, and the civil liberties of the clergy were severely restricted.

The brutal treatment worked. By the late 1930s the Protestant church had given up direct resistance to the Nazis. The German Christians remained as Nazi lackeys. Compromised by their identification with the Nazi state, they failed to convert more than a handful of the people.

In contrast to the Protestants, the Catholic Church presented a more united front. But its leaders proved to be no more courageous or successful in opposition.

The two elements favouring

"Führer, my God!"



"No evil priest can prevent us from feeling that we are the children of Hitler. We follow not Christ but Horst Wessel. Away with incense and Holy Water. We care nothing for the Cross. The Swastika is our salvation!"

Hitler Youth refrain chanted at the Nuremberg rally, 1934.

Left: Hitler Youth give the Nazi salute at a funeral ceremony in Munich in 1933. The Concordat provided temporarily for an uneasy co-existence between the Catholic and Nazi youth groups. But Hitler was determined that he and not God would win the battle for the hearts and minds of Germany's children.



Left: Protestant Church youth groups were quickly absorbed by Reichsjugendführer Baldur von Schirach. The Church was unable successfully to compete with the attractions offered by the Hitler Jugend.

Below: Adolf Hitler possessed the charisma and single-mindedness of an Old Testament prophet, and the young were encouraged to believe in him as an earth-bound saviour.





Above: Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 – 1945), the German Evangelical theologian, viewed Hitler as the anti-Christ. Incarcerated for his involvement with the political opponents of Nazism, he was executed in Flossenbürg concentration camp just before the end of the war.

Below: The Nazi assault on the Catholic Church was sidelined with the opening of hostilities. To the disgust of atheists like Bormann and Goebbels, many Germans turned to religion as their suffering increased.



violations against the spirit of the Concordat culminated in the visit of Cardinal Faulhaber to Hitler on 9 November 1936. He found the German Chancellor to be quite expansive and enthused about the practice of religion overall. But when the Cardinal touched upon the Nuremberg laws and the forced sterilisation of the mentally defective Hitler turned cool. He announced that such matters were the sole concern of the State and not the Church.

PROTEST AND REACTION

The meeting with Hitler changed nothing, and harassment of Catholics continued to increase. Five months after the meeting the Pope issued a general encyclical, entitled *Mit Brennender Sorge* – ‘With Burning Anxiety’. The encyclical, which condemned Nazi attacks on the Church, was read from every Catholic pulpit in Germany.

As might have been expected, the Nazis were outraged at the Pope’s criticism. Hundreds of monks and nuns were pilloried in the press, and many were arraigned before the courts on trumped-up charges ranging from fraud to sexual deviancy.

Goebbels, himself a lapsed Catholic, turned the court cases into show trials. In a sensational smear campaign he filled the newspapers and airwaves with lurid tales of the gross immorality inside the mysterious world of the cloisters. The trials led to the incarceration of hundreds of nuns and monks in concentration camps.

WAR BRINGS RELIEF

With the outbreak of war, Hitler had more serious and immediate concerns and persecution of the Churches declined. The Nazis felt that the Church could wait until military victory had been secured. Besides, the Churches were of little trouble to Hitler. From September 1939, their opposition was focused on keeping what autonomy was left to them rather than on attacking the regime or taking any moral stand.

Indeed, large elements within

all of the Churches actually supported of Hitler’s war. Pope Pius XII backed the attack on Poland. The Papal Nuncio – the Vatican’s Ambassador to Germany – sent his heartiest congratulations to Hitler for his victory over France. Archbishop Galen, who stood out for his unwavering attacks on the Euthanasia programme, nevertheless condemned the British as “Plutocrats who fought for their sacks of coffee and their cotton plantations.”

Operation Barbarossa was viewed as a preservation of Christianity in the face of the godless Communist hordes – a Holy crusade, in fact. In the Vatican, members of the Jesuit order were being trained to follow in the wake of the Wehrmacht!

SUPPORT TO THE END

German Catholics hardly wavered in their support of the Nazis. At the end of the war the Archbishop of Bamberg said: “Christ expects that we should be as obedient as He was, willingly accepting suffering and bravely carrying the Cross.” Cardinal Faulhaber described Hitler’s survival of the 20 July bomb attack as an act of Providence.

Although there were many individual acts of incredible bravery by clergy during the years of the Third Reich, the churches failed to mobilise sufficient public support to mount a crusade against the horrors of the Nazi regime.

Most of the clergy found themselves wanting in the face of absolute evil. This catastrophic failure of nerve will forever be a stain on the integrity of western religion which did nothing when confronted with the evidence. As Pastor Niemöller wrote:

“First the Nazis went after the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did not object. Then they went after the Catholics, but I was not a Catholic, so I did not object. Then they went after the trade-unionists, but I was not a trade unionist, so I did not object. Then they came after me, and there was no-one left to object.”

Catholics were their international links, and the existence, at the beginning, of a political party.

The Church hoped to win concessions from Hitler through co-operation. This belief was underscored by the Concordat that Franz von Papen negotiated

with the Vatican in 1933. Among other things, this treaty was meant to guarantee the exercise of religious freedom.

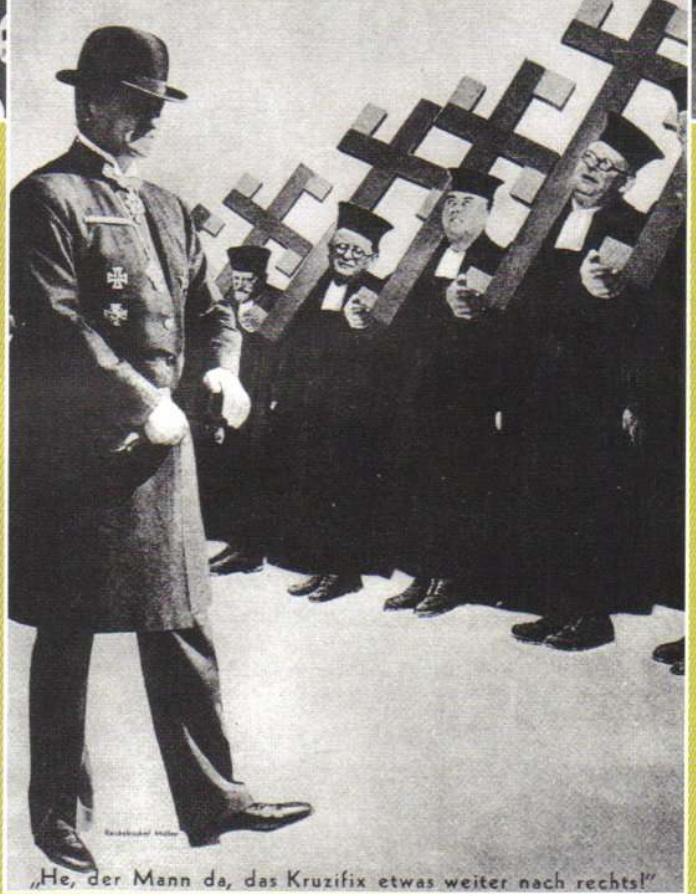
Before long, however, the Nazis started to undermine the Catholic Church’s authority. Protests against the mass of



Protestant disgrace



Der Reichsbischof richtet das Christentum aus



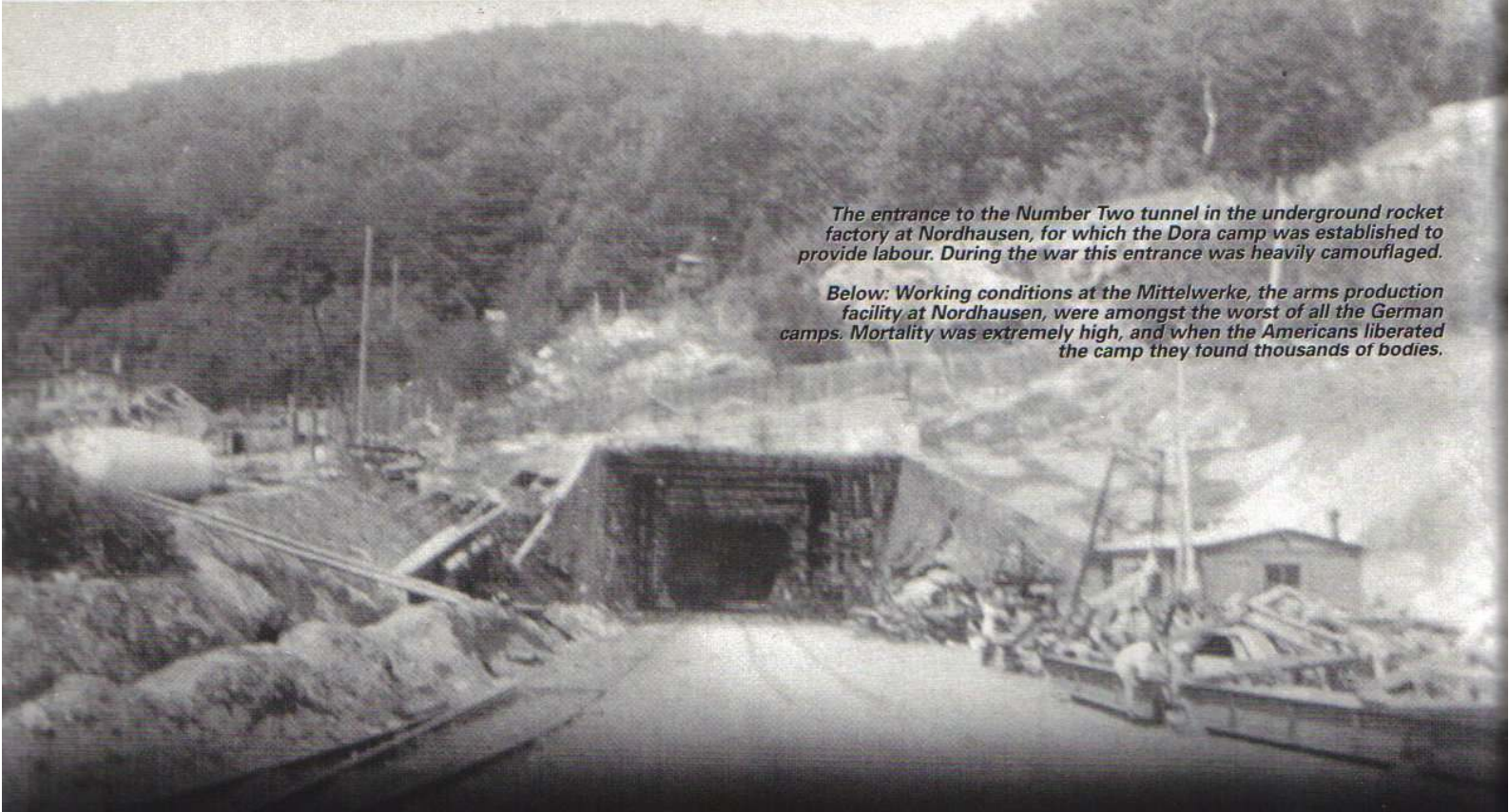
„He, der Mann da, das Kruzifix etwas weiter nach rechts!“



Top: The German Christians were profoundly racist. At the watershed meeting in the Berlin Sportpalast on 11 November 1933, Dr Krause (extreme left) called for the expurgation from the gospels of all traces of "the scapegoat and inferiority theology of Rabbi Paul".

Above: The cartoonist John Heartfield satirised the warping effect of German Christianity on the Protestant Church.

Left: Ludwig Müller (1883 – 1945) was the first Reichsbischof of the German Christian Evangelical Church. His failed intention was to unite National Socialism and Protestantism.




The entrance to the Number Two tunnel in the underground rocket factory at Nordhausen, for which the Dora camp was established to provide labour. During the war this entrance was heavily camouflaged.

Below: Working conditions at the Mittelwerke, the arms production facility at Nordhausen, were amongst the worst of all the German camps. Mortality was extremely high, and when the Americans liberated the camp they found thousands of bodies.

Dora-Mittelbau

In the face of intense Allied bombing, the high-level of German jet and rocket production seemed almost miraculous. But it was not until the Mittelwerke factory was liberated that the Allies discovered that the 'miracle' was based on working tens of thousands of slaves to death.





AS THE ALLIED air offensive against the Reich increased in intensity, Germany looked increasingly towards decentralised factories as the safest place in which to maintain war production of jet fighter aircraft and weapons like the Fieseler Fi 103 (V-1) and the A4 (V-2) rockets.

On the night of 17-18 August, 1943 the RAF launched a massive raid on the rocket research and development establishment at Peenemünde on the Baltic Coast. Buildings, laboratories and test sites were destroyed, and a number of key technicians were killed. Following the raid, the Germans looked around, with some urgency, to find a more secure production site.

A special committee had already drafted plans to decentralise the production lines for the *Sonderauschuss A4* rocket, otherwise known as the V-2. Alternative sites were prepared at the Zeppelin Werke at Friedrichshafen and the Rax Werke at Wiener-Neustadt.

UNDERGROUND WORKS

These too were vulnerable, however. After both were bombed by the RAF in the summer of 1943, it was decided to set up a completely new factory to produce the A4. It was to be located underground, in the southern Harz Mountains at Nordhausen, about 240 km south-west of Berlin.

The secret project was originally put forward by Himmler to Hitler on 22 August 1943, only four days after the Peenemünde raid. At a meeting in the Führer Headquarters in East Prussia, the *Reichsführer* proposed that prisoners from local concentration camps be used as a labour force. Slave labour had already been employed on major projects like the Atlantic Wall, and was increasingly being used by German war industries. Slaves were cheap, expendable and



When the US Army's 3rd Armored and 104th Infantry Divisions liberated the camp at Nordhausen, they found less than a thousand living prisoners, and over 3,000 corpses. Less than a month before there had been more than 12,000 inmates in the camp, with tens of thousands more in satellite camps.

could be used in extremely dangerous locations.

Two weeks later Hitler approved the project. Missile production would be carried out by a state company called *Mittelwerke GmbH* or 'Central Works Ltd.' Excavation of the new facility would be overseen by *SS-Brigadeführer* Dr Ing Hans Kammler.

Kammler was head of the department of the WVHA – the

SS economics organisation – that had earlier built the gas chambers at Auschwitz. He is variously reported to have disappeared during the battle of Berlin or the defence of Prague in 1945.

The underground chambers which provided the heart of the *Mittelbau* or 'Central Structure' were the remains of a sodium sulphate mine in the side of the Kohnstein mountain. The site

had been in existence since 1917 when the *Badische Anilin und Soda Fabriken* (BASF) started to mine sodium sulphate or Anhydrite for use in the manufacture of explosives. In 1934 the tunnels were bought by the *Wirtschaft Forschungs Gesellschaft* (WiFo) for storing strategic raw materials. The site was already served by a railway link and was well camouflaged in thick pine forests.



Above: Supplies are stacked outside one of the main entrances to the Mittelwerke site. The extensive camouflage was designed to hide the underground factory from Allied bombers. The watchtowers were to protect against sabotage and slave insurrection.

Below: The underground factory and the concentration camp which supplied it were subject to the tightest security. This sign, on the approach to the Dora camp, warns that any unauthorised person moving beyond that point risked being shot without warning.



The excavation work was to be undertaken by men transferred from Buchenwald. The first draft of 100 prisoners arrived on 23 August 1943, and began to enlarge an existing storage depot. Time constraints ensured that within six months 12,000 prisoners were toiling underground enlarging the mine into a huge network of access tunnels and production galleries where V-1, V-2 rockets, *Taifun* (Typhoon) anti-aircraft rockets and engines for Junkers Flugzeugmotor were assembled.

The two main galleries at Mittlebau were known as *Stollen* A and B. They were nearly 3.2 km long and wide enough for two trucks to pass. Forty-six lateral tunnels linked the main tunnels. Known as *Querstollen* or *Kammers*, the lateral tunnels were 200 metres long and 9 metres high. It was in these smaller chambers that production was undertaken.

Initially the prisoners lived and worked underground. They worked 18 hour shifts, and only saw daylight once a week at the

Sunday roll call. Sleeping cubicles were limited, and had to be shared by the day and night shifts. Conditions were damp, the atmosphere was laden with dust, and acrid fumes from the sodium sulphate were everywhere. The temperature was 9° Centigrade and humidity was 90 per cent.

When he arrived at the underground factory Jean Mialet, a French prisoner looked at the gaunt figures toiling in the darkness, smoke and dust and thought, "This is what hell must be like".

SPEER'S WORKERS

Albert Speer as Minister of Armaments demanded to see the Mittelwerke. After the war, in conversation with the writer Gitta Sereny, he insisted that he had been outraged by the conditions. He claimed to have "demanded to see the sanitary provisions....No heat, no ventilation, not the smallest pail to wash in; death touched us with the cold, the sensation of choking, the filth that



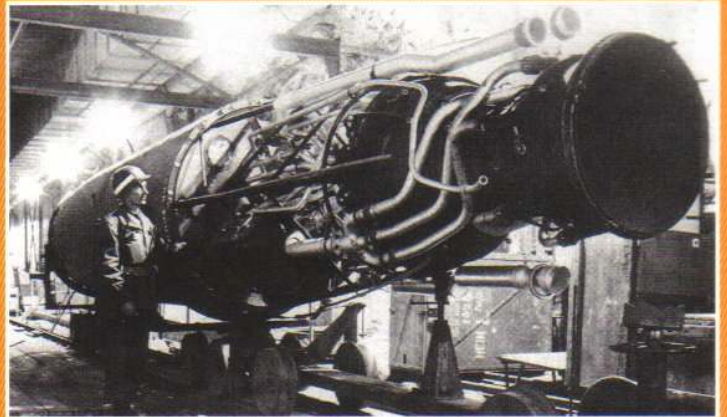
High-tech Slave works

BY EARLY 1945, Mittelbau was producing about 690 V2s a month, and space was being made to produce Taifun. This was a free-flight contact fused rocket that would be fired in salvos of 30 from a mobile launcher. Though the system was never fully tested, an order was placed for 10,000 and by the end of the war 600 had been completed. Perhaps the most striking feature of the missile was the speed with which it entered production. Design started in the autumn of 1944 and was frozen for production in October. Manufacture began in January 1945.

Such high production rates meant that the prisoners had to be worked at a murderous pace. The difficult working conditions and insanitary living conditions meant that the death rate was probably higher than in any other camp in Germany, only exceeded by the dedicated extermination camps in Poland. About half of the 65,000 slaves sent to the complex died.



Above: The first slave labourers at the Mittelwerke were concentration camp inmates transferred from Buchenwald, and included some Jews. Later forced labourers were mostly French, Polish and Russian.



Top: The Mittelwerke consisted of two parallel main tunnels, ten metres wide and six metres high, connected by 50 connecting tunnels or galleries. This is Gallery 29, in which V-2 (A-4) rocket motors are being assembled.



Above: An American guard examines an almost completely assembled V-2 rocket in the main tunnel at Nordhausen. The majority of the 6,000 V-2 rockets were assembled in this underground complex.

Left: Newly completed Fieseler Fi 103 Flying bombs (V-1s) await despatch at the southern end of the Mittelwerke complex. The underground factory completed more than 10,000 V-1s in the last six months of the war.



US Army historian George Moise accompanied the troops who liberated the Dora camp. In his report Moise commented: "Although the camp and the great number of bodies, some partially burned, was unpleasant in the extreme, there was not the stench of death that might be expected, largely because there was not enough flesh on most of the bodies to rot. They were literally skin and bones."

impregnated us. The latrines were barrels cut in half with planks laid across. They stood at each exit from the rows of sleeping cubicles".

Jean Michel, another French slave labourer, recalled that one of the SS guards' jokes was to wait until dysentery-racked prisoners sat on the barrels, and then push them into the mess.

BRUTALITY BREEDS INEFFICIENCY

Speer asked to sample the prisoners' midday meal. "I tried it; it was an inedible mess." After the inspection was over he found that thousands had already died. "I saw dead men...they couldn't hide the truth and all those who were alive were skeletons. I ordered the immediate building of a barracks camp outside and then signed the papers for the necessary materials". Speer's outrage was probably less to do

with the suffering of the inmates, and more to do with the need to build more rockets. Prisoners provided with even the smallest of comforts are going to be more productive than those with none.

ABOVE GROUND

Michel ruefully remembered that it was not until March 1944 that the barracks were completed. "The work was as terrible as ever, but we could at least leave the tunnel for the six hours of rest allowed".

Known variously as Dora, Dora-Mittelbau, Dora-Nordhausen or Nordhausen, the camp in the Harz mountains eventually became the hub of a complex of 31 sub camps. The bulk of the prisoner population was Russian, French or Polish. At its peak 12,000 prisoners were housed in the main camp; in all, some 60,000 prisoners from 40 nations passed through

the complex. They quarried stone, worked in construction, and provided labour for munitions factories, chemical works, and arms manufacture. The death rate was among the highest of all the camps: half of the inmates died or were executed. On average 100 died every day during the building of the tunnels. At the beginning of 1945, with construction complete and full production under way, the death rate fell to about 2,000 per month.

RESISTANCE GROUPS

There was an active resistance movement in the Dora camp, mostly taking the form of sabotage of rockets on the production line. Several hundred prisoners were executed, initially on a subterranean gallows in the main tunnel but later in the open. Rene Steenbeke, who had served as an officer in the Belgian Army,

recalled executions on the Roll-call square at Dora.

"I saw 51 prisoners being hanged, their hands behind their backs, a piece of wood in their mouths, hanged in groups of about 12. They could see their comrades being killed before them and they had to watch".

Franz Rosenbach, a Gypsy who had already survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald, arrived at Nordhausen early in 1944 when he was 15 years old.

"I am still amazed today that anyone survived. We got almost nothing to eat, a piece of bread, perhaps two or three potatoes. But you know, when you are young, you can take an awful lot." Rosenbach drilled the charging holes for blasting. "When the explosions were set off, prisoners had to start clearing up immediately. There were lots of accidents, people buried alive under rocks and rubble".

Liberation, retribution

SEVERAL THOUSAND Buchenwald inmates were sent to the Mittelbau site in 1943. An average of 100 men died each day as they dug 46 tunnels into the mountains. The tunnels were up to 30 metres high. Prisoners were initially housed underground, but in the spring of 1944 a compound known as Dora was constructed on the surface. In the autumn of 1944 the SS turned Dora into an independent camp, with a population of around 12,000 and controlling at least 30 sub-camps.

Conditions at Nordhausen were bad even by concentration camp standards, and the mortality rate was particularly high. Sick prisoners were sent to Auschwitz or Mauthausen for disposal. Most surviving prisoners had been shipped to Bergen-Belsen by the time the American 1st Army captured the site on 11 April 1945.

Aurio Piero, a platoon commander in the US 33rd Armored Regiment, drove his tank up to the gates that were opened by the prisoners, since their guards had fled. He entered a building and found "dead bodies there, naked, emaciated, tied hand and foot".

Within days of liberation, US Army technical officers had moved in to seize rocket equipment and scientists. They were able to ship 100 complete V2s and other equipment in 300 railway wagons to be evaluated at White Sands, New Mexico. One survivor of Dora-Mittelbau commented that since these V2s were the basis for US rocket research, perhaps he had helped put a man on the moon.


Between 7 August and 31 December 1947, an American military tribunal tried nineteen former staff members of the camp; fifteen were found guilty. The protective-custody camp leader, Hans Karl Moeser, was sentenced to hanging. The other defendants received sentences that ranged from five years to life imprisonment.

The area then passed under Soviet control. In 1948 the Red Army attempted to destroy the complex but only managed to blow up the entrances to the tunnels. With German reunification the Mittelbau site has been given historical status: some tunnels have been preserved as a memorial to the thousands that died in their construction.

Top Right: About 30,000 prisoners were evacuated from Nordhausen in April 1945 as the Americans approached. Only the dead or those too sick to walk were left behind. When the Americans arrived, they found more than 3,000 corpses, and under a thousand barely living survivors.

Right and below: Enraged at what they had found, the American soldiers rounded up all of the able-bodied males from the nearby town of Nordhausen and set them to clearing the camp and burying the dead. All claimed ignorance of what had occurred on their doorstep, even though many had worked in factories in the area which made extensive use of slave labour supplied by camps in the Dora complex.





Henri Pétain, the 'victor of Verdun', led Vichy France from 1940 to 1944. He believed he was saving his country, but by working with the Germans he took France down a dark road of collaboration and involvement in the Holocaust.

FRANCE does not take defeat lightly, and no regime had survived losing a war since 1789. The France of 1940 was no exception, divided as it was more than any other major belligerent in Hitler's War. The debacle of the crushing defeat of 1940 triggered a new round in a struggle which had already come perilously close to civil war. In 1936, the election of the Popular Front had signalled the near-triumph of Communism in France. From that moment, the conservative right regarded the left as a greater menace than Hitler. Hitler was perceived as a bulwark against Communism, Europe's best hope against Moscow.

NATIONAL HERO

On the night of 16 June 1940, President Lebrun called upon France's greatest living military hero to save the nation. Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain, 84, had done so once before during the First World War. He had defeated the great German offensive at Verdun, going on to take charge of the shattered French armies in 1917 after widespread unrest in the ranks. The embodiment of traditional French martial virtue, the ageing Marshal was asked to form a new cabinet and make peace.

Pétain was a great military commander and staunch French patriot. His reputation has never fully recovered from the events of 1942-44, but his argument against continuing the fight from

Pétain / Laval

The hero and the horse-trader

The twin pillars of the Vichy regime are synonymous with the national disgrace of France during World War II. They were also convenient scapegoats for conscience-ridden collaborators after the war ended.



France's African colonies is unimpeachable. "To deprive France of her natural defenders in a period of general disorder is to deliver her to the enemy. It is to kill the soul of France."

Pétain's view was also popular. With the sole exception of his former *protégé*, General Charles de Gaulle, he had the support of the French political and military establishment. More to the point, most of the French people were behind him, and at first the government he established at Vichy enjoyed virtually universal support.

By contrast, De Gaulle, "a blot on the honour of the French officer corps," as Pétain described the renegade to Hitler, presided over an insignificant handful of die-hards or adventurers, depending on one's point of view. France's colonial empire remained loyal to the Marshal, determined, as events soon demonstrated, to defend French soil against the British and the 'puppet' de Gaulle.

LIVING WITH THE NAZIS

Pétain believed that the war would not last much longer. Britain would make some sort of compromise with Hitler and a general European settlement would follow. This was not the bizarre assumption of an old man on the edge of senility. In June 1940 it was the view of most international political observers, and a sentiment quietly shared by a number of key figures in London — with the conspicuous exception of Winston Churchill.

On 3 July he ordered the Royal Navy to attack the French fleet, moored at Mers-el-Kebir in Algeria: an act of ruthless cynicism that cost over 1,500 French lives that has cast a shadow over Anglo-French relations for more than 50 years. Ostensibly, the intention was to prevent the Germans securing control of France's modern battleships, but there was no evidence they were about to, and none has since come to light.

The true purpose was to send

Laval was the antithesis of Pétain. He looked like a rogue and the white cravat that he affected as his personal trademark lent him an air, not of distinction, but of gangsterism.



a signal to the USA and to would-be compromisers in Britain. The British would fight Hitler to the finish.

Pétain's view of the British was already jaundiced. In 1918 he had believed the British were on the verge of retreating to the Channel ports, prepared to leave France in the lurch as Germany launched its 'do or die' offensive to win the war before US troops reached Europe. The BEF's flight to Dunkirk in 1940 had not come as a surprise to him.

Pétain withdrew the French ambassador from London. On 20 September Vichy French

forces defeated an attack on Dakar mounted by the British and a contingent of Frenchmen loyal to de Gaulle. In retaliation, Pétain ordered French aircraft to bomb Gibraltar, three raids taking place in September.

Pétain was head of state. His designated successor and de facto head of government was Pierre Laval, a 57-year-old career politician noted for his ability to bend with the wind. Both suspected the British action to be the prelude for a full-scale assault on France's global empire, since this had been the cornerstone of British

policy from the eighteenth century to the defeat of Napoleon. The only prudent course of action to preserve France's status as a world power was to transform the June armistice with Germany into a complete settlement.

WORKING WITH HITLER

Laval established a close working relationship with the German ambassador in Paris, and presented a succession of proposals that would, if taken in full, bring France into a military alliance with Germany against her former ally. After all, the



Above: A France humiliated at Compiègne needed heroes to believe in. Pétain, who had saved the French army in 1917, was promoted as the object of national veneration. But his rule combined elements of absolute monarchy, fascist dictatorship and saint's cult in equal parts.

Top right: Pétain meets with Hermann Goering. The Marshal publicly insisted that France was working 'in collaboration' with Germany. Few privately believed that the relationship was anything but that of servant and master.

Below: Pétain and Laval were often at odds. Their one shared bond was that both had rural, working-class backgrounds. They vied over who really had the power in Vichy France and both tried to shift this responsibility to the other at their post-war trials.



British had struck the first blow. "Our armistice is irregular, for defeated France finds herself almost at war with the same enemy as her victorious adversary," wrote the French general Huntziger. Foreign Minister Baudouin told the German ambassador that he wished France to be an 'associate power'. One early proposal, developed by the French army as early as July 1940, was for French forces in Syria and the Lebanon to advance into Iraq and seize the oil fields. The oil could then be piped to the Levantine coast, boosting French negotiating power with either alliance.

DISSENSION AT THE TOP

Pétain sacked Laval in December after his negotiations failed to make progress. His successor was Admiral Darlan, long-time minister of the navy – more a politician than a sailor. Far from defending the empire, Darlan intended to expand it. Former German colonies like the Cameroons would, he anticipated, be returned to

Germany under the terms of a Franco-German peace treaty, but France would take British overseas territories by way of compensation.

Unfortunately for Pétain's regime, German diplomacy was becoming an oxymoron. The preening ignoramus Ribbentrop and a Führer now in the grip of megalomania took no account of their ambassador in Paris. Military alliance with France or Spain was on offer in early 1941, their respective colonial ambitions forcing the Germans to choose between one or the other. Germany got neither.

Hitler thought Franco's price too high, so Gibraltar remained a strategically vital base for the British. Ribbentrop rejected Darlan's July 1941 offer to normalise Franco-German relations on the basis that France would defend her empire against the British, provided Germany guaranteed her pre-war borders, including Alsace-Lorraine.

Hitler wanted nothing from France but plunder, and even that was badly managed. From 1941-44 French factories

Doves and hawks



THE POLITICIANS distrusted the generals. The officers were unsure of their men. But no Frenchman anticipated the speed and scale of the German victory in 1940. It was an unprecedented catastrophe: even in the summer of 1870, after Napoleon III's brittle sword snapped in battle with the Germans, a republic had arisen to carry on the fight through the winter. Now the Third Republic died, as it was born, to the sound of gunfire around the chateau-fort of Sedan. The nation was divided – between those who would fight the invader by whatever means, and those pragmatists willing to trade with the Nazis.



Above: In 1940, De Gaulle and Premier Reynaud had urged the French government to continue the fight against Germany from North Africa. Pétain, the hero of Verdun, opted to stay with the French people, "to share their sorrows and their miseries".

Above left: Laval's successor as Deputy of France was Admiral Francois Darlan, seen here with Pétain on a visit to a factory. Driven by hatred of the British, he deserted Reynaud in July 1940 to side with the 'doves'.

Left: 22 June 1940 is a date that will live in infamy in the history of France. In the same rail carriage at the same place where the Armistice was signed to end World War I, France prostrated herself before Hitler.

produced only a fraction of the military equipment they had delivered before the war.

REPRESSION

If the foreign policy of Pétain's government was very traditional, its activities at home were a determined attempt to turn back the clock. *Travail, Patrie, and Famille*, replaced the revolutionary trinity of *Liberté, Egalité* and *Fraternité*. France had industrialised much more slowly than Britain or Germany, but even so, by 1931 the majority of the population lived in towns.

Pétain and the conservative right wanted a 'return to the soil', contrasting the supposed virtues

of the peasant farmer against city slickers and the urban proletariat. Vichy domestic policy was essentially revenge on the Popular Front, but passing new laws under the protection of foreign guns is a high risk venture. As French overtures to Hitler were rejected, and Nazi policy was revealed in its full horror, collaboration proved to be worse than futile.

What began as a legitimate attempt to make peace and protect French interests eventually involved Vichy in the Holocaust, forced labour and a civil war against the resistance. If France was almost 100 per cent Pétainist from 1940-42, it was

almost 100 per cent Gaullist by 1944. Laval's recruitment of the paramilitary *milice* to combat the resistance, without German assistance, led to civil war.

VICHY SWEEP ASIDE

After Darlan's failure, Laval returned to power in 1942 to preside over four ministries before the collapse of the Vichy government at the end of 1944. The German invasion of the unoccupied zone in November 1942 destroyed what little leverage remained to Pétain. The French fleet scuttled itself rather than surrender to the Germans. After that, the Vichy regime descended the same moral slope

as its would-be German allies. So obsessed were its leaders with maintaining social order in France, that they accepted the use of French labour in Germany and the extermination of the Jews.

The Marshal and his government were spirited to Germany as the Allies overran France in 1944. Pétain was jailed for life, dying in prison in 1951 at the age of 95. Attempts to rehabilitate the Marshal have continued ever since and may yet succeed as recent French presidents have taken to laying a wreath on his grave. Laval was shot in 1945, his trial hurried to get a conviction before the imminent general election.

Ardennes **Offensive**

Going down fighting





In December 1944, in the deep snow of the Ardennes Hitler gambled everything on one final roll of the dice.

AT 5.30 AM on the misty morning of 16 December 1944, in the snow covered hills of the Belgian Ardennes, 200,000 men of German Army Group B launched an attack against the VIII Corps of the US 1st Army. The 113 km front stretched from Monschau in the north to Echternach in Luxembourg in the south. Although with the benefit of ULTRA the Allies were able to decode German radio traffic, the attack was unexpected, and caught both the British and American commanders by surprise.

Part of the reason for this was that the Germans were attacking out of home territory and were therefore using domestic or military telephone lines rather than radio. For added security they were sending messages by despatch rider. The other reason for the surprise was that to the Allies it seemed insane to commit carefully husbanded reserves on one all-out attack.

GHOST FRONT

From north to south the German armies committed to the offensive were the 6th SS-Panzer Armee under *Generaloberst der Waffen-SS* "Sepp" Dietrich, the 5th Panzer Armee under the energetic General Hasso-Eccard von Manteuffel and the 7th Army under General Erich Brandenburger. The force comprised twenty-five divisions of which eleven were armoured. The three armies were



designated as Army Group 'B' under the overall command of the hard driving Field Marshal Walther Model.

In preparation for the offensive Hitler had moved his headquarters from the *Wolfsschanze* – the Wolf's Lair in East Prussia – and occupied the HQ at Ziegenberg. This headquarters bunker complex had been built in 1939 near Bad Nauheim, Hesse under the direction of Albert Speer. During the invasion of France in 1940 Hitler had deemed it too luxurious, but it now found a new use.

Bad weather had grounded the Allied air forces, and the German assault initially enjoyed considerable success against the six US divisions in the area. Three of these were new to Europe, and three were resting in what was regarded as a quiet area that had therefore been nicknamed the 'Ghost Front'. Under the shock of the attack, some 9,000 men from the 106th Division were captured on the Schnee Eifel on 19 December.

Above: German losses in the offensive amounted to 82,000 men killed, wounded and captured, together with 750 tanks and 600 aircraft. Although Allied losses were comparable, they had the resources to lose. The Germans did not, and had now exhausted their final reserves.

Left: In their last major offensive on the Western Front, the Germans used up the last few remaining first class troops that they still possessed.

Despite superior equipment, including over 100 Tiger II heavy tanks, and with a reputation as hard fighters, the men of the 6th SS-Panzer Armee made only halting progress. They hit the one concentrated American force in the Ardennes. The men of the 2nd Infantry Division had been conducting a local attack through the lines of the 99th Infantry Division. These two divisions held a feature known as the Elsenborn ridge for two days before they withdrew, having imposed a critical delay.

To the south of the ridge, a *Kampfgruppe* made up from units of the *Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler* enjoyed the only real success, pushing as far as Stoumont on the Amblève river. It was men from this formation, commanded by 29-year-old *Standartenführer* Joachim 'Jochen' Peiper, who would be

held responsible for the killing of 71 US PoWs at the town of Malmédy in Belgium on 17 December.

EARLY SUCCESS

Considerable gains were made following attacks by elements of the 5th Panzerarmee. This formation had only two Panzer divisions, and included a high proportion of lowly *Volksgrenadier* divisions. The timetable of the 5th Panzer Armee was delayed by the determined defence at St Vith where the 7th Armoured Division, a combat command of the 9th Armoured and a surviving regiment of the 106th Division formed a horseshoe-shaped defence around the town. The town should have fallen by the second day, according to German plans. General von Manteuffel finally seized it on December 21.



Above: Once again, the Germans underestimated the fighting abilities of American forces. Apart from the surrender on the Schnee Eifel, the GIs defended stubbornly against Hitler's massed panzer divisions.

Below: The penalty for failure: men of Obersturmbannführer Otto Skorzeny's special sabotage commando, captured behind the lines wearing American uniforms, are prepared for the firing squad.



Below: At 5:30 A.M. on 6 December 1944, eight German armoured divisions and 13 German infantry divisions launched an all-out attack on five divisions of the United States 1st Army. At least 657 light, medium, and heavy guns and howitzers and 340 multiple-rocket launchers were used in the opening artillery barrage on unprepared American positions.



The thrust by the 2nd Panzer and Panzer Lehr Divisions took them a to point less than 10 kilometres from the Meuse at Dinant. Here, on 24 and 25 December they encountered the British 29th Armoured Brigade, part of the British XXX Corps that had been moved south to provide defence in depth.

To the south the 7th Army, with only the 5th Fallschirmjäger Division as elite troops, enjoyed limited success. By 24 December the paratroops had advanced over 50 kilometres and cut the road south from Bastogne to Arlon.

Wacht am Rhein was marked by some unusual improvisations. For lack of artillery the Fieseler FZG 76 *Kirschkeim* – Cherry Stone, better known as the V1 flying bomb, was employed. However, though it had a 1 tonne HE warhead it was an inaccurate delivery system and was therefore employed against targets like the major logistics centre at Antwerp.

IN ENEMY UNIFORMS

A unique force, designated Panzer Brigade 156, was committed to *Unternehmen Greif* – Operation Griffin. They were tasked with the capture of bridges across the Meuse and with spreading confusion in the rear areas of the US Army. The unit was composed of about 2,000 English speaking German soldiers dressed in US uniforms, driving US vehicles. They were commanded by *Obersturmbannführer* Otto Skorzeny. However only 150 could speak convincing "American", and they were organised into nine four man teams in Jeeps commanded by *Hauptsturmführer* Steilau. One group penetrated as far as the Meuse on 17 December but they were killed by an anti-tank mine. Eighteen of those who were caught were subsequently shot. Their presence behind American lines did however cause considerable confusion, and led to a rumour that they were an assassination squad that had targeted General Eisenhower.

On the night of 15 December,

a reinforced battalion of 1,200 paratroops from FJR 6, commanded by the veteran *Oberst* Freiherr August von der Heydte, parachuted behind American lines near Malmédy. They were to block the movement of reinforcements south from the US V Corps.

PARA DISASTER

Dropped by inexperienced Ju 52 pilots, the battalion was badly scattered. Once on the ground von der Heydte had about 200 men, only a fraction of his force, under command. With no communications with the main German ground forces, the commander of what had become *Kampfgruppe von der Heydte* thought that the best move was to break through to German lines.

Most were captured, including von der Heydte, though about 100 did link up with the ground forces. They achieved nothing, but the very presence of paratroops and the deception plans initially convinced American intelligence officers that a large scale airborne operation had been launched. It was the last German airborne operation of the war. German fuel reserves at the beginning of the campaign were critically low. Continued success of the operation was dependent upon the capture of enemy fuel dumps. Although it was a close-run thing, 6th SS Panzer Armee failed to capture the huge fuel depot at Stavelot, and two further stockpiles were denied the Germans by furious local defence.

AIR POWER

On 23 December the weather cleared and the Allied air forces came out in strength. Fighter bombers attacked German vehicles and artillery positions, while medium bombers hit the crowded road and rail network in Germany. The good visibility also allowed supplies to be air-dropped by C-47s to the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne.

By Christmas Eve, the OKW realised that *Wacht am Rhein* had



Wacht am Rhein

IN DECEMBER 1944 the Germans had been pushed back to the borders of the Reich, but Hitler had no intention of going over to the defensive. With new powers, following the failure of the July Plot, *Reichsministers* Goebbels and Speer had increased production of weapons and equipment, as well as finding men to make up new formations for the *Waffen-SS* and new – and largely ineffective – *Volksgrenadier* divisions for the army.

With these men and weapons, Hitler proposed that an operation code named *Wacht am Rhein* – Watch on the Rhine – be launched through the Ardennes, across Belgium to the port of Antwerp. This would cut off the Allied forces in north west Europe.

It was a fantastic plan, which showed little grasp of reality. "If we succeed" enthused Hitler "we will have knocked out half the enemy front. Then let's see what happens!" The more clear-headed planning staff at OKW had looked at a 'small solution', a pincer attack that would cut off US forces, but Hitler wanted a re-run of May 1940.

Below: Hitler's plan appalled his generals. To ensure obedience, the attack was led by the 6th SS Panzer Army; the first time so large a unit was designated SS.



The plan





"NUTS"

IN THE RUGGED Ardennes, the road junctions at Bastogne made that town a critical objective. By 20 December it had been surrounded and came under heavy artillery armoured and infantry attacks. A battle of epic proportions soon developed. Eisenhower refused to be panicked by the German assault. In a meeting with Bradley, Patton and Devers he stated: "the present situation is to be regarded as one of opportunity for us and not disaster". He ordered up the veteran 'Screaming Eagles' of the 101st Airborne Division to assist in the defence of Bastogne. It reached the town by road just seven hours ahead of the Germans after a 200 km overnight drive from Rheims. Some German units bypassed the objective, but in the hard going across country the tanks soon ran out of fuel. The siege of the town was finally broken when tanks of the 4th Armored Division from General George S. Patton's 3rd Army broke through from the south on 26 December. They linked up with the 'Battered Bastards of Bastogne' as the 101st had prosaically dubbed themselves.

Right: On 22 December German officers under the flag of truce delivered a message from General der Panzertruppe von Luttwitz, demanding the surrender of Bastogne. After receiving the message Brigadier General McAuliffe, commander of the 101st exclaimed "Aw, nuts" - which was his official reply to the request for surrender.



Above: Because the Americans were surrounded they could only be re-supplied by air drop. However, the weather conditions were the worst in living memory and Allied planes were grounded.

Above: In Bastogne's neighbouring villages and in the surrounding woods hand-to-hand fighting of enormous savagery took place.

Left: Bastogne was a strategic position which both the Germans and Americans wanted to occupy. This led to a race between the American 101st Airborne division and the Germans. The Americans managed to get there first and occupied the town. The Germans were not far behind and quickly surrounded and besieged the American defenders.

run its course. It would not be until 8 January that Hitler finally authorised a withdrawal. The 2nd Panzer Division and *Panzer Lehr* had been halted, and by 4 January the US 1st and 3rd Armies were beginning to counter attack along the salient that had become known as 'The Bulge' by Allied commanders and their staffs.

In just twelve days the Germans had been pushed back to their start lines on the border.

LUFTWAFFE'S LAST GASP

It was typical of German planning in 1944/45 that *Unternehmen Bodenplatte*, which was meant to support *Wacht am Rhein*, took place on 1 January 1945, too late

to affect the outcome. 'Operation Baseplate' was another last-gasp attack, this time by the Luftwaffe. Eight hundred fighters struck at Allied airfields in Belgium and Holland. Like *Wacht am Rhein*, it was a final spectacular gesture that cost the Allies about 500 aircraft, including General Montgomery's personal C47.

However, Allied strength was such that losses could be replaced in a fortnight. Few Allied aircrew were lost, while the Luftwaffe lost 170 pilots killed and 67 taken prisoner.

The *Wacht am Rhein* delayed the end of the war by about six weeks and destroyed the bulk of the German armoured reserve.

Malmedy Infamy



ON THE SECOND day of the offensive, a truck convoy of the American 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion was intercepted southeast of Malmedy by a regiment of the 1st SS Panzer Division of the Leibstandarte-SS, under the command of 29-year-old SS Lt. Col. Jochen Peiper. His troops had earned the nickname 'Blowtorch Battalion' after burning their way across Russia, and had also been responsible for slaughtering civilians in two separate villages.

Upon sighting the trucks, the Panzer tanks opened fire and destroyed the lead vehicles. This brought the convoy to a halt while the deadly accurate tank fire continued. The outgunned Americans abandoned their vehicles and surrendered.

The captors then opened fire on the prisoners. Survivors were killed by a pistol shot to the head, in some cases by English speaking SS who walked among the victims asking if anyone was injured or needed help. Those who responded were shot. A total of 81 Americans were killed in the single worst atrocity against U.S. troops during World War II in Europe.



Top: Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, 74 former SS men, including Jochen Peiper and SS Gen. Sepp Dietrich, were tried by a U.S. Military Tribunal for War Crimes concerning the massacre. 43 were initially sentenced to hang.

Above: A unit from Kampfgruppe Peiper in a posed photo. The atrocity at Malmedy was counter-productive. Two survivors escaped and reached the Allied lines, where their story roused intense fury. News of the massacre strengthened the resistance of even the greenest units.

Left: The captured U.S. soldiers were herded into a field. An SS tank commander then ordered an SS private to shoot into the prisoners, setting off a wild killing spree as the SS opened fire with machine guns and pistols on the unarmed, terrified POWs.

Battle of the Bulge

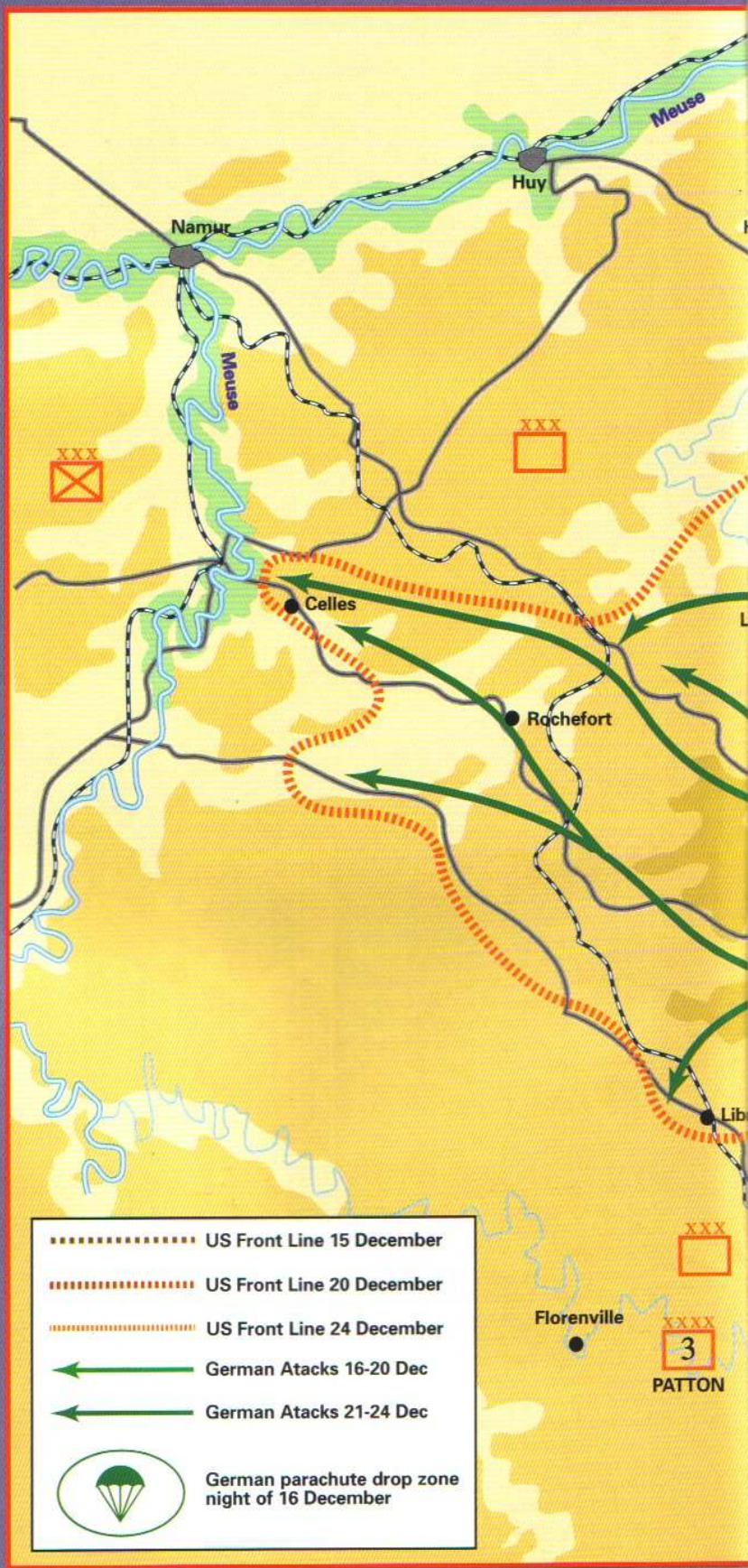
The commanders in charge of the offensive were Field Marshal Gerd von Runstedt, Commander in the West, Field Marshal Walther Model who was in tactical command, with panzer armies led by Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich and Hasso von Manteuffel. All were skeptical about Hitler's plan. They felt that taking Antwerp was something that just could not be accomplished by the German army at the time. Model was quoted as saying: "This plan hasn't got a damned leg to stand on". Hitler was presented with a new, smaller plan which changed the objective to only launching a small attack to weaken the Allied forces in the area, rather than launching an all out attack to retake Antwerp. The generals pleaded with Hitler to change the plans, but he refused.

The resulting land battle was one of the largest of World War II. There were more than a million participants, including some 600,000 Germans, 500,000 Americans, and 55,000 British. The German military force consisted of two Armies with ten corps (equal to 29 divisions), while the main American opposition included a total of three armies with six corps (equal to 31 divisions).

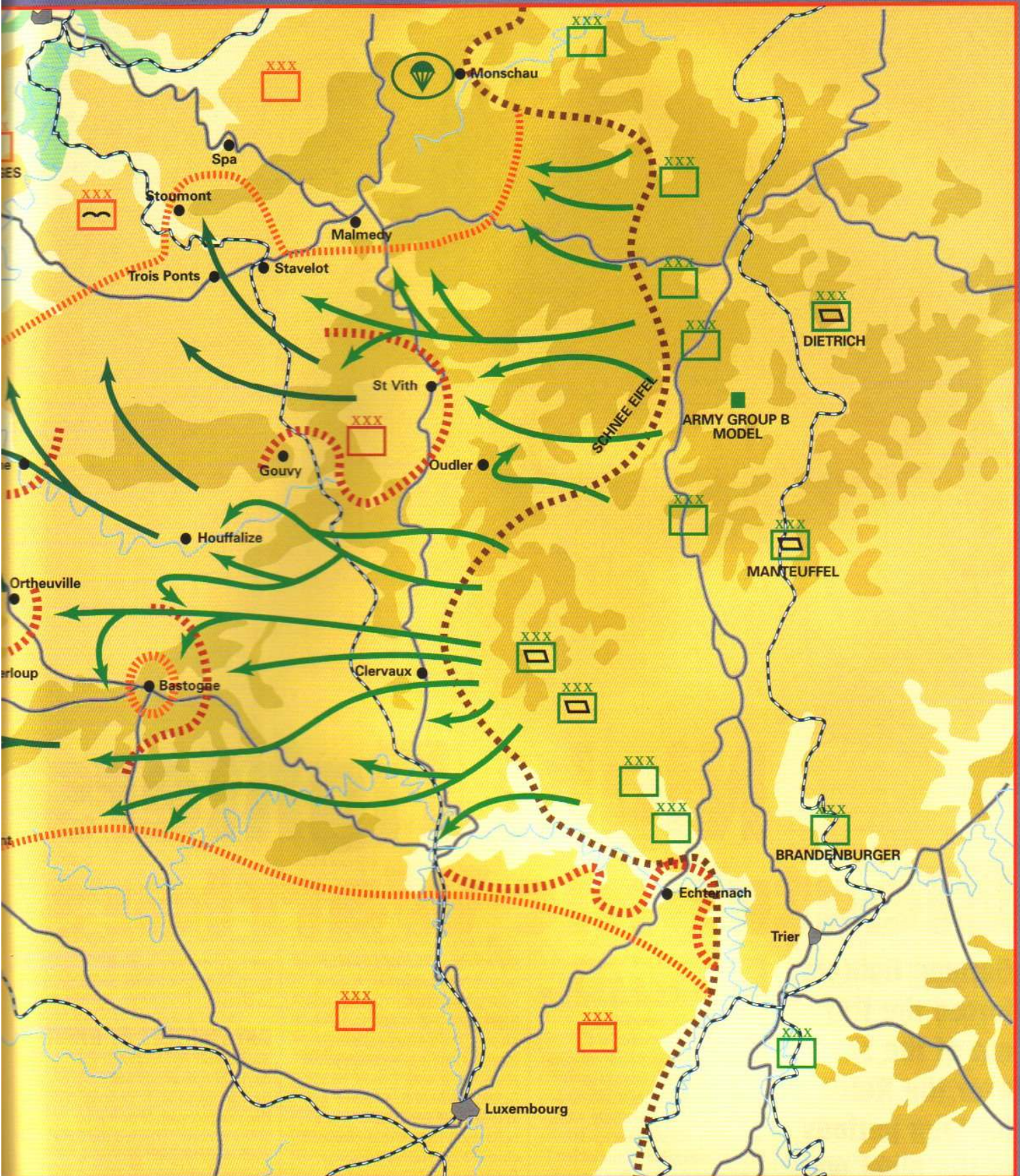


Above: The turning of the tide. A Tiger II heavy tank, abandoned by its crew after it ran out of fuel, is examined by an American unit. German failure to secure Allied supply depots doomed the offensive.

Below: Even though the German Offensive achieved total surprise, nowhere did the American troops give ground without a fight. Within three days, a determined American stand at St Vith and the arrival of powerful reinforcements ensured the ultimate failure of German ambitions, and signalled the end of Hitler's last great gamble.



HITLER'S BATTLES 28





Night Fighters

Electronic Warriors

German fighters forced the RAF out of the sky over the Reich for long periods of the night war.

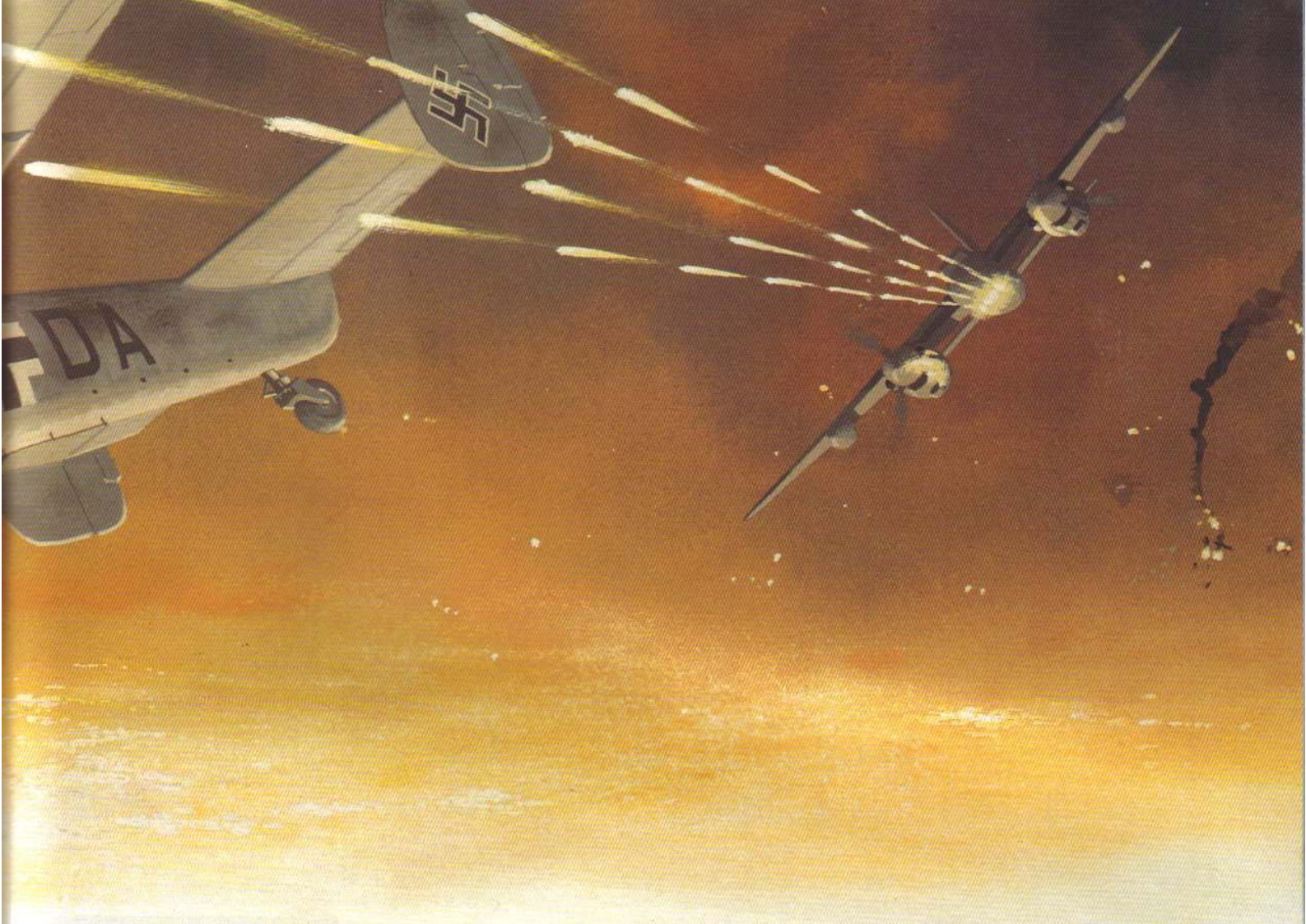
THE LUFTWAFFE formed its first night fighter unit in 1939: a token *staffel* of Messerschmitt Bf 109Ds. The formation was expanded to become a *gruppe* (IV/JG 2) in 1940, and scored its first kill in July when one of the pilots intercepted an RAF Whitley. He admitted it had been pure luck that he saw

the bomber. The Bf 109s carried no airborne radar, and liaison with ground radar stations was haphazard. Pilots had tantalising glimpses of enemy aircraft, illuminated by searchlights; but if a bomber was 'coned' by the lights, it would be targeted by anti-aircraft guns and it was a bold night fighter that ventured closer. *Fliegerabwehrkanone*, or flak, remained Germany's

primary defence against nocturnal air raids for some time to come.

DAY FIGHTERS BY NIGHT

Single-seat fighters built for daylight operations had severe limitations as night fighters. The flat perspex panels of the Bf 109's canopy reflected the light from searchlights, making it hard to see anything. If a pilot



A late-model Messerschmitt Bf 110 night fighter is jumped by a Mosquito intruder of the RAF. The British and Germans waged the world's first high-technology war in the skies over Germany. Although the RAF had great success in hunting down the German fighters, the Luftwaffe had even greater success wreaking havoc among the streams of British heavy bombers who were pulverising the Reich.

found a bomber, his fighter was likely to be travelling so much faster that he had but a few seconds to aim and fire before he roared past and the bomber evaded into the night.

NIGHT DESTROYERS

After the conquest of Denmark, one *staffel* of IV/JG 2 was based at Aalborg, co-located with Messerschmitt Bf 110Cs of 'destroyer' squadrons I/ZG 76 and I/ZG 1. Wolfgang Falck, commander of I/ZG 1, wrote a report on the success of his Bf 110s in intercepting at night, working in cooperation with searchlights and ground radar. In June he was appointed to be the commander of the newly created NJG 1 after *Oberst* Josef

Kammhuber became 'Air Officer for Night Fighters' on the Luftwaffe staff. RAF Bomber Command was stepping up its campaign of night raids and Goering himself had staked his reputation on stopping it.

The first Bf 110 night fighters had no modifications for their new role, other than a coat of black paint which was believed to be the best camouflage at night. They bore a badge based on Falck's family coat-of-arms, designed by *Oberleutnant* Victor Mölders (brother of the top-scoring ace, Werner). The Bf 110 had a good rate of climb and a service ceiling of 32,000 feet. British bombers typically flew over Germany at 18,000 feet. With a top speed of more

than 300 mph, the Bf 110 could easily overhaul bombers reported by ground radar stations. The Hampden, the fastest British bomber then in service, had a maximum speed (when loaded) of only 254 mph. The Bf 110's cannon and machine-gun armament was powerful enough to bring down a bomber with a single pass.

Bf 110 WORKHORSE

Built in successive dedicated night fighter versions, the Bf 110 remained the primary German night fighter until 1944 and was still in widespread service at the end of the war. It proved able to take the addition of radar, a third crewman to operate it, and heavier cannon

armament. Climb rate and maximum speed were reduced, but the aircraft still retained a healthy performance margin over enemy bombers.

In daylight it was a different story, however, and Goering's decision to order the night fighters up against the US 8th Air Force reveals just how out of touch he had become. On 4 February 1943, eight Bf 110s of IV/NJG 1 were ordered to attack a formation of US B-17s: they claimed three bombers shot down but all eight night fighters were damaged by defensive fire and were unavailable for operations that night. Overruling protests by several COs, Goering insisted his night fighters join the day battle.

Airborne radar

DURING 1942, British monitoring stations became aware of references by German night fighter crews to a device called 'Emil-Emil'. Suspicions were aroused that this might be some form of airborne radar, but the RAF had no idea of its frequency. One monitoring station in Norfolk picked up a likely transmission, and on 3 December a Wellington equipped with suitable receivers was sent on the world's first electronic 'Ferret' mission. It was attacked and badly damaged by a German Ju 88 night fighter, but managed to transmit the vital information and return to crash land in the sea off the Kent coast.

Six months later, a *Nachtjagd* crew defected, landing their Ju 88R at Dyce in Aberdeen. It carried 'Emil-Emil', more properly known as the FuG 212 Lichtenstein C1 airborne interception radar.

This was the start of two years of a fierce but unseen struggle in the night, with the British introducing countermeasures to each new Luftwaffe radar which appeared, while the Germans frantically developed new radar systems in an attempt to by-pass the latest British countermeasures.

Within weeks, USAAF P-47 Thunderbolts escorting the B-17s caught and slaughtered several night fighter squadrons. Ludwig Becker, with 43 kills the leading night fighter ace, was among the dead, his Bf 110 standing no chance against the more manoeuvrable P-47.

EARLY CONVERSIONS

Experiments with other aircraft were carried out during 1940. Eighteen Dornier Do 215 bombers (export models of the Do 17 on order for the Swedish air force) were converted to night fighters in the same way the RAF had converted some of its Blenheims. Nine Dornier 17Z-10s were completed with the nose of a Ju-88C. Supplied to 5/NJG 1, they packed a powerful punch: four MG FF 20 mm cannon and four 7.92 mm machine guns. They also carried the *Spanner-Anflage* (trouser press) infra-red searchlight, designed to pick out the exhaust gases in the wake of a distant



Above left: A Dornier Do 217N-2 carries an early radar array, used by both the prototype FuG 202 and the production FuG 212 Lichtenstein radars. Under ideal conditions, it had a maximum range of about four km and a minimum range of 200 m.



Left: This Bf 110G-4 has the improved FuG 220 Lichtenstein SN-2B. Although accurate, it had a minimum range of 500 metres, so a smaller FuG 212 C-1 was also fitted for close-range work.

Above: The angled dipole antennae on this Heinkel He 219 indicate that it carries a Lichtenstein SN-2d radar, the last version of the FuG 220 to see large-scale operational use.

bomber, enabling the night fighter pilot to take aim through a special gunsight. Introduced in June 1940, it proved impractical as the maximum range was only about 200 metres.

AIRBORNE RADAR

The Do 17Z-10s also carried *Funk Gerät* (FuG) Lichtenstein C1 airborne radar. Lichtenstein operated on a frequency of 490MHz with a 620 mm wavelength. Four double pairs of dipole aerials bristled from the aircraft's nose, reducing its maximum speed. The radar had a range of between 3000 and 5500 metres, with a minimum of 200 metres, depending on conditions. Its search angle was restricted to a 24-degree arc. Three scopes were provided for azimuth, ranging and elevation. It was far from 'user friendly', but experienced operators could direct their pilot on to a bomber provided ground control vectored them approximately into the right area.

Although performance was similar to that of their prey, results were sufficiently encouraging for night fighter variants of the larger Dornier 217 to be produced. The Do 217N combined the nose of the Do 217J-2 with the airframe of the maritime bomber, the Do 217M. The main production version was the Do 217N-2 on which the dorsal turret was omitted to save weight. It was in a Do 217 that *Oberleutnant* Ludwig Becker (4/NJG 1) scored the Luftwaffe's first aerial victory using the combination of ground control airborne radar. On the night of 16 October 1940 he shot down a Wellington off the Dutch coast.

DEFENCE OF THE REICH

The Kammhuber line was to be Germany's shield until summer 1943. By then the Dorniers were being retired in favour of Ju-88s and Bf-110s. The Dornier was already underpowered, making the loss of an engine on take-off

"When you are facing the difficult times to come for you and your country, you men of NJG 4 can carry with you the certain conviction that you did everything humanly possible to win the war for Germany"

Last order from Heinz Wolfgang Schnauffer, history's top-scoring night fighter pilot, 8 May 1945

or landing extremely dangerous, and the addition of more radar, radio equipment and cannon did nothing to help. Its 'greenhouse' canopy also had a tendency to dazzle the crew when searchlights veered too close.

Markings

This aircraft, of 7/NJG 2 (Squadron 7 of Night Fighter Wing 2) operating out of Gilze-Rijen, was captured when it landed by error at RAF Woodbridge in July 1944.

Performance

Powered by two BMW 801 radial engines, a clean Ju 88G had a maximum speed of over 600 km/h, but drag from the SN-2 aerials reduced this to about 570 km/h.

Radar

The Ju 88G-1 was fitted with the FuG 220 Lichtenstein SN-2, working through the distinctive *Hirschgeweihe* (Stag's Antlers) antennae. Operating in the 90-megacycle band, the SN-2 was only slightly affected by the RAF's 'Window' countermeasures.

Crew

Ju-88 fighters had a crew of three, comprising pilot, flight engineer and radio/radar operator. Late in the war, an extra radar operator was added to cope with the increased number of detection devices.

Armament

Ju 88 fighters replaced the ventral gondola of the bomber versions with a ventral gun pack containing four MG 151 20-mm cannon.

Junkers Ju 88G-1

Another German bomber proved more promising in the night fighter role. The original Junkers Ju-88 *schnellbomber* had evolved into several sub-types. The Ju-88C-2 was a long-range fighter version that served with one *staffel* of KG30 during the Norwegian campaign. Its solid nose housed a 20 mm cannon and three 7.92 mm machine guns. In July 1940 the *staffel* was ordered back to Germany and incorporated into the night fighter arm as 4./NJG 1. Successive dedicated nocturnal variants followed, until the Ju-88 was the primary German night fighter. Heavier and bulkier radar equipment, radios and weapons led to stability problems, overcome in the final Ju-88G sub-series which incorporated the larger

vertical and tail surfaces of the Ju-188 bomber. The usual liquid-cooled Jumo 211 engines were replaced by BMW 801D air-cooled powerplants.

Ju-88 night fighters ventured over Britain during the 1940 Blitz. Reasoning that it would be easier to intercept British bombers over their own bases rather than in the black vastness of the sky over Europe, NJG 1 flew a number of intruder missions that continued into 1941. These led to the first night fighter versus night fighter engagements.

FIGHTER vs FIGHTER

On 18 August 1940 a Ju-88C was intercepted near Chester and shot down over the North Sea after a long chase by a Blenheim Mk 1F flown by Pilot

Officer Rhodes. However, one German intruder nearly killed Bomber Command's most famous pilot, Guy Gibson. Then flying a Beaufighter night fighter, he was ambushed while coming into land at Wellingore on 8 April. His brakes shot away, the Beaufighter careered off the runway; his radar operator was injured but Gibson escaped without a scratch.

INTRUDER TRAP

Night fighters clashed over Germany as Bomber Command's offensive gathered pace. On the night of the Peenemunde raid, RAF night fighter ace Bob Braham led four Beaufighters on the fringe of the bomber stream. Sure enough, the German radar operators identified them as stragglers –

the best target – and vectored five Bf 110s from IV/NJG 1 to intercept them over the Frisian Islands. The result was a disaster for the Luftwaffe. Braham shot down two of the Germans and one of his flight brought down a third. One of the surviving Bf 110s was damaged by German flak and the other aborted due to engine failure.

The bane of the German defences was the de Havilland Mosquito: the 'wooden wonder' that could carry the bomb-load of a Flying Fortress to Berlin and back – at twice the speed and for half the price. Too fast and agile for the standard German night fighters to catch, it served as a pathfinder bomber and as an intruder. The German response was twofold: the first Luftwaffe night fighter to be

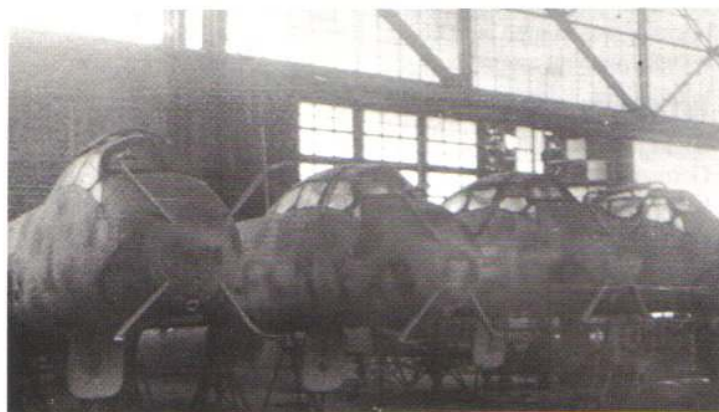


Above: This Junkers Ju 88G-1, which Obergefreiter Mäcke landed by mistake in Suffolk, proved an intelligence goldmine. It proved to RAF Bomber Command that Luftwaffe night fighters carried sensors to home in on British Monica tail-warning radars and on H2S navigation radars.



Above: Fortunately for the Allies, fewer than a dozen Me 262B-1a/u1 night fighter conversions of the two-seat version of the German jet made it into service. It was equipped with the FuG 218 Neptun radar.

Below: The Junkers Ju 388J would have been an extremely potent high-altitude night fighter. It was expected to enter service in January of 1945, but manufacture was halted in December 1944.



built as such from the outset, and the development of jet-powered interceptors.

The original design for the Heinkel He 219 *Uhu* – 'Owl' – was for a twin-engine multi-role fighter/fighter-bomber/torpedo-bomber. But it was offered to the Luftwaffe in the wake of the Battle of Britain, which had cost the *zerstörer* squadrons dearly. Erhard Milch, who was striving to reduce the number of aircraft types in service, opposed its development. However, General Kammhuber used the special powers granted him by Hitler to force the project into service.

NIGHT OWLS

He recognised that the aircraft had the makings of a first class night fighter and it was for this role that the final design was optimised. Further delays ensued, partly caused by RAF Bomber Command flattening the Heinkel factory at Rostock and destroying most of the documentation. Milch seized on every negative report to frustrate the He 219, but it won competitive trials against the Ju-188 and Do-217N.

Major Werner Streib, *Gruppenkommandeur* of I/NJG 1, was an early convert to the He 219 and he demanded pre-production airplanes for his unit. He flew the type's operational debut on 11-12 June 1943, shooting down

five Lancasters in one sortie. His unit shot down 20 British aircraft – including 6 of the previously uncatchable Mosquitos – in July.

Built with an eye to jet propulsion, the He 219 was the first combat aircraft to have ejection seats for the crew. With de-icing, auto pilot, blind landing aids and armour plating, it carried a formidable armament of up to four 30 mm cannon and two 20 mm cannon in the nose or ventral gunpods, plus two upward-firing 30 mm cannon.

Some German pilots claimed that had the He 219 been built in real numbers, the British bombers would have suffered unacceptable casualties. However, the He 219 did have a number of major drawbacks, not the least of which was that it was underpowered. At over 8 tonnes unloaded (and 15 tonnes fully fuelled and armed) the *Uhu* had an unimpressive rate of climb; loss of one engine during take-off or landing was incredibly dangerous. And many Bf 110 pilots refused convert, claiming that the cockpit misted over too much on landing in cold conditions.

'JAZZ MUSIC'

Upward-firing guns, dubbed *Schräge Musik* ('Slanting' or 'Jazz Music') were introduced by a number of units from the

end of 1941. Oberleutnant Rudolf Schonert fitted two upward firing 7.92 mm MGs on his Do 17Z-10. Such weapons enabled a fighter to fly in formation with a target and to attack from beneath, rather than risk a shoot-out with an alert rear-gunner.

FIRING FROM BELOW

Three Do 217Js were fitted with upward-firing 20 mm cannon a year later, and the system became standard in NJG 5 by early 1943. However, although its use became widespread, it was not without hazard: Hauptmann Manfred Meurer, *Kommandeur* II/NJG 5, (63 victories) was killed when a Lancaster he shot down crashed onto his He-219.

In the last months of the war, the Germans introduced two jet night fighters. The single seat Arado Ar 234 bomber/reconnaissance aircraft was fitted with radar and a ventral gun-pack to become the Arado Ar 234C-3/N two-seat night fighter. The radar operator was crammed into a tiny compartment behind the pilot. Neither man had much chance of bailing out in an emergency. The Ar 234 handled superbly at altitude, but its 'greenhouse' nose reflected searchlight beams all around the cockpit, which could be very distracting. Even so, with its safer single engine performance, the Arado was a better night fighter than the Messerschmitt Me 262B-1a/U1.

262 BY NIGHT

Two-seat versions of the Me 262 had been belatedly produced for training purposes, but by early 1945 they were being converted on the production line to night fighters. Its unreliable jet engines remained a menace, the two-seater being even harder to fly on one engine than the day fighter. Nevertheless, both jet night fighters were able to intercept British Mosquitos. However, they were so fast that against lumbering night bombers they tended to overshoot.

Night Intruders



THE LUFTWAFFE WAS NOT the only air force to have night fighters in the skies over the Reich – RAF intruders found rich pickings preying on their German equivalents. Beaufighters and Mosquitos fitted with advanced centimetric radar hovered on the fringes of British bomber streams and patrolled over known *Nachtjäger* bases.

The Germans were the first to use intruders, sending Dornier Do 217s and Junkers Ju 88s to infiltrate returning British bomber forces early in the war. The British returned the favour in the summer of 1943, and Beaufighters of No.141 squadron shot down 23 enemy night fighters in a matter of months.

But the Beaufighter had little performance advantage over its German equivalents. However, this was more than made up for by the arrival of night fighter versions of the de Havilland Mosquito, which began operations in August 1943. Almost impossible to catch as a bomber, it now struck fear into Luftwaffe hearts as a hunter.

Above: The first truly effective night fighter of the war, the Bristol Beaufighter was a tough, heavily-armed machine which became operational in September 1940. Equipped with AI Mk IV radar, it was the main reason why the Luftwaffe gave up the night Blitz.

Below: Although only a minority of the 7781 Mosquitos built were completed as night fighters, it first became operational in the summer of 1942, and began intruder missions over Germany the next year. Mosquitos accounted for more than 1500 Luftwaffe aircraft in three years.



DIE WEHRMACHT

HERAUSGEGEBEN VOM OBERKOMMANDO

FN° 15

SPECIALE DE LA «BERLINER ILLUSTRIRTE ZEITUNG» - PREMIER NUMERO DE NOVEMBRE 1940

Signal

NAZI MEDIA

ADOLF HITLER well knew the value of publicity, even before he won the allegiance of Joseph Goebbels, master of propaganda. Eher Verlag, the central press of the NSDAP, was founded in 1923 under the management of Max Amann, Hitler's sergeant from the trenches.

With the establishment of the Third Reich, Amann became Reich Press Leader, ordered to supervise all matters concerning the German publishing business. According to the 1937

Organisationsbuch der NSDAP, "He is charged with the creation of a press for the German people, which is responsible and answerable to him, and which reflects the life and experiences of the German people's community. The *Reichsleiter* for the Press has the function of issuing regulations necessary to carry out the demands concerning publication policies established in Article 23 of the Party Program and to supervise their execution."

Article 23 of the Party Platform provided that:

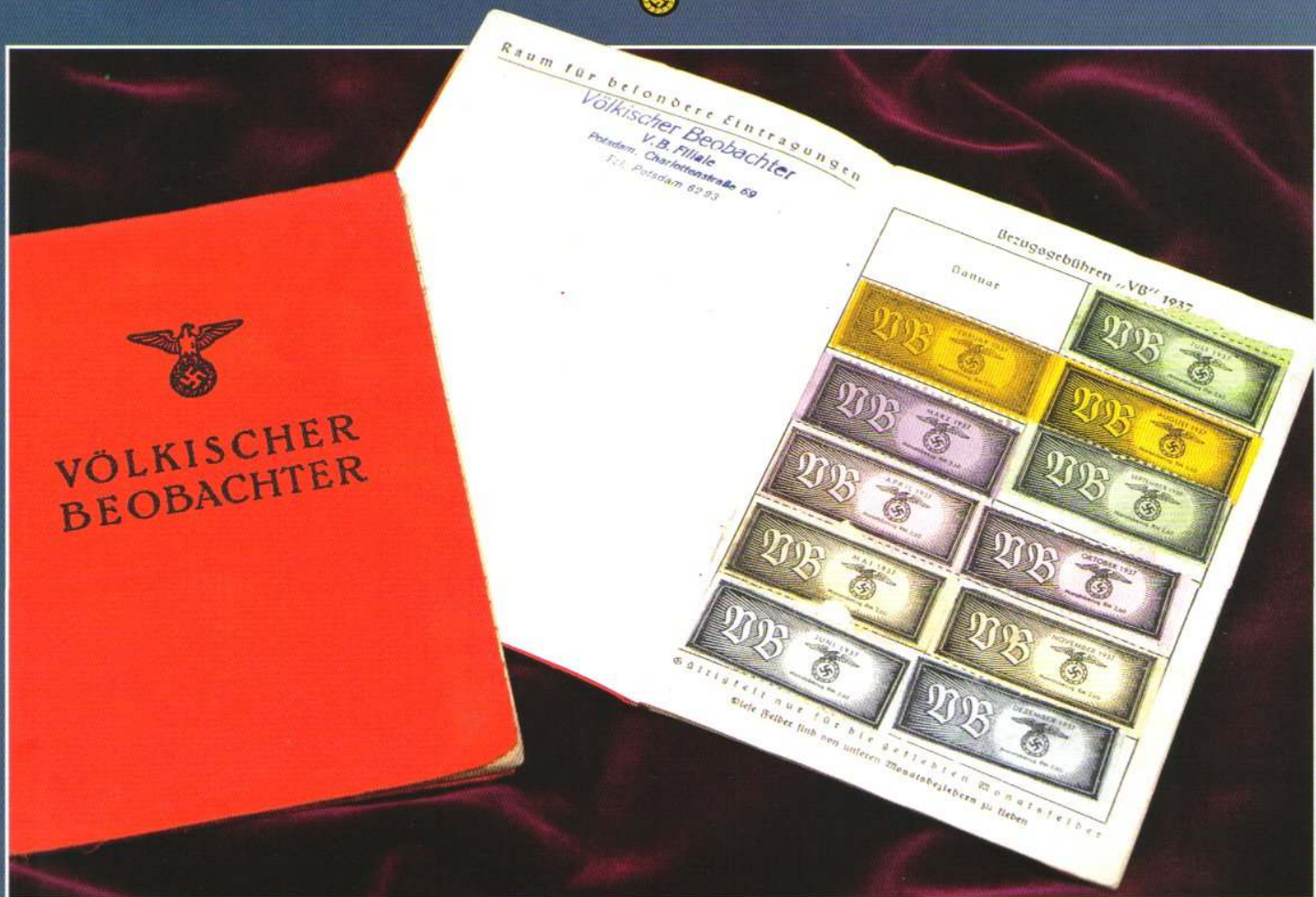
Above: Propaganda magazines were a major staple of the Nazi publishing effort once war broke out. *Signal*, a highly illustrated magazine, appeared in several European languages, while *Die Wehrmacht* was for consumption by home and uniformed readers.

(a) all editors and newspaper personnel must be "members of the nation"; (b) non-Germans are prohibited from financial participation in, or influence of, newspapers; (c) the publication of papers "which do not conduce to the national welfare" is prohibited; (d) tendencies in art or literature "of a kind likely to disintegrate our life as a nation" will be prosecuted; and (e) "institutions which militate

against the requirements mentioned above" will be suppressed.

Thus the Reich Press Leader not only controlled Party publishing, but was tasked with bringing the entire German press into line with National Socialist ideology. Amann was given wide powers, which he used to the full. By 1942, he controlled more than 80 percent of all German newspaper publishers.

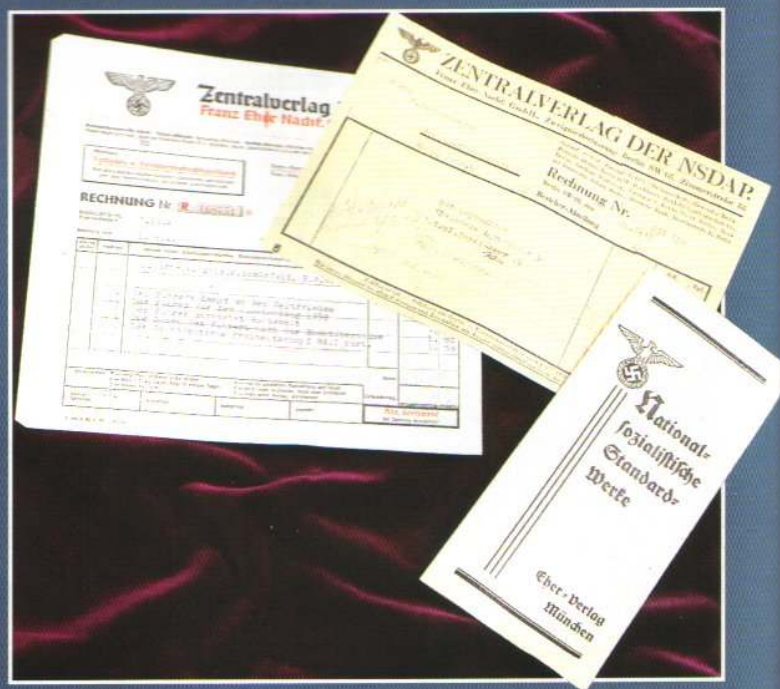
NAZI SYMBOLS



Above: The NSDAP membership book for a party member working for the Völkischer Beobachter, with stamps showing paid party dues. Party domination of a press which was legally bound to follow the party line did nothing for readability: circulation was dropping at the outbreak of war, and only began to rise when the population began to demand more information during the conflict.



Above: Newspapers have long been a major part of cafe society in Europe, and most such establishments have copies of various publications on wire holders for patrons to read. This was just as true under the Third Reich as it is today, and this example was used to display copies of Der Führer. Der Führer was an illustrated broadsheet published by the NSDAP Gau in Baden, edited by Gauleiter and Reich Governor Robert Wagner.



Right: The Zentralverlag der NSDAP was the name Eher Verlag took for the publishing of official party material. This ranged from the Völkischer Beobachter through party magazines like Das Schwarze Korps produced for the SS to Hitler's autobiography and political platform, Mein Kampf. Seen here are a pair of Zentralverlag invoices, together with a publicity brochure for Standarte GmbH, the Eher company responsible for publishing local Gau-level newspapers.



Above: Photograph books about the Führer, illustrated and written by his personal photographer. Heinrich Hoffmann, an old party comrade, was the only person officially allowed to photograph Hitler, and his books presented his master in the best possible light. Their popularity contributed to the immense wealth Hoffmann amassed during the Third Reich.

Left: Also immensely popular, but for very much darker reasons, were the books produced by Julius Streicher's Stürmerv Verlag. Der Giftpilz, (The Toadstool) and 'Don't trust a Jew on his oath' were violently anti-Semitic comic books aimed particularly at young children. Pages were typically entitled 'How Jewish traders cheat', 'Money is the god of all Jews', and 'How the peasant was swindled out of his farm'.

A-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

X-Gerät

When the Luftwaffe switched to night bombing over Britain at the end of 1940, it made pioneering use of electronic warfare techniques to enable its aircraft to find targets on the darkest of nights. The original system used was called *Knickebein*, which involved an aircraft flying down a radio beam until it crossed another beam which let the bomber crew know it was over the target. The British managed to spoof *Knickebein* with false beams, so the Luftwaffe introduced *X-Gerät* for use by the pathfinders of KG 100.

X-Gerät was similar to *Knickebein*, in that the pilot flew down a directional beam, code-named 'Weser'. Some distance from the target, the aircraft crossed the coarse warning

beam, known as 'Rhein'. About 30 km from the target, a second beam known as 'Oder' was crossed. The time taken between the beams enabled the ground speed to be calculated by an automatic device. Five km from the target a third beam was intercepted. On crossing the 'Elbe' beam, an accurate clock was started, which used the speed data collected from the first two beams to automatically release incendiaries and flares to mark the target for the rest of the bomber force. Under ideal conditions, *X-Gerät* was accurate to within 200 metres.

Right: Developed from a blind-flying aid, the X-Gerät system allowed German pathfinders to locate targets up to 400 km away with a fair degree of accuracy.



X-Report

The X-Report was a secret memorandum drawn up by long-time opponent of the Nazis, Hans von Dohnányi. The report chronicled the anti-Nazi activities of former lawyer and Abwehr agent Dr Josef Müller. At the outbreak of war Müller tried to make contact with the British via the Vatican. In

October 1939 Müller presented the X-Report to his fellow anti-Nazis. According to the report, the preconditions under which the Pope was prepared to act as an intermediary between Germany and Great Britain included the removal of the Nazi regime, the formation of a new German government, no attack

in the West by either side and a settlement in the East in Germany's favour.

Through an intermediary it was submitted to General Walther von Brauchitsch but though he did not favour an attack in the West he rejected the report as "plain treason". Leaders of the Resistance then

attempted to win over *Generaloberst* Franz Halder, who also rejected it saying that it would be "a breach of my oath to the Führer and could not possibly be justified". The failure to act on the X Report lost the generals their last chance to win a favourable peace for Germany.

Yalta Conference

A key wartime conference between 'The Big Three' – Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom, President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States and Joseph Stalin of the USSR – was held at the Crimean resort of Yalta between 4 and 11 February 1945. The decisions taken there did much to shape the character of Eastern Europe for the next 50 years.

There were eight major areas of agreement, one of the most important of which was the convening of a conference in San Francisco at which the United Nations would be established. Following its defeat Germany was to be demilitarised and administration was to be divided between the USSR, USA, France and Britain.

Stalin must be considered the 'winner' in the negotiations,

since in return for his agreement to participate in the war against Japan – an agreement he fulfilled only after the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb – he received a free hand in Eastern Europe. Poland's eastern border was to be fixed on the Curzon Line and the Communist 'Lublin' government would be recognised and set up in Warsaw.

Right: The two most important players at Yalta were Stalin and Roosevelt. The American President was a very sick man – he only had weeks to live – and the Soviet dictator was able to win a number of concessions out of the meeting. Churchill disagreed strongly, but by now the Americans were the senior partners in the western alliance, and most objections by the British were noted but not acted upon.



Yiddish

Yiddish was the dialect language used by over 12 million Jews in Eastern Europe. Originating in Germany during the Middle Ages, it was spoken by Jews who fled from the Holy Roman Empire during and after the Crusades.

Written in Hebrew, Yiddish is basically Middle High German with a large number of Hebrew words and usages. A strong Slavic component was added to the language after large numbers

of Jews settled in the east from the 15th and 16th Centuries. By the end of the 19th Century, large-scale assimilation of Jews in towns and cities meant that Yiddish was seen, even among the Jewish community, as a second class dialect, spoken mainly in country districts and by backward people. However, the rich Yiddish literary and artistic tradition brought about a minor revival early in the 20th century.

The Nazis saw Yiddish as a *vergewaltigung*, or a 'violation' of the German language. Nazi pseudo-philologists established 'revealing' connections between Yiddish and German thieves' argot or *Rotwelsch*.

The persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe by the Nazis in World War II and after the war by the Communists under Stalin destroyed the cultural base of the language. In Israel Yiddish was

initially regarded as the language of the oppressed from Europe and rejected in favour of Hebrew. However Yiddish is now seen as the language of the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto, the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka, and the cultural life of Theresienstadt and has attracted new interest in Israel and among orthodox Jewish communities in the United States.

Yorck von Wartenburg, Peter Graf (1903 - 1944)

Born in Klein Oels, Silesia (now Olesnica, Poland) on 13 November 1904, Prussian aristocrat Peter Yorck von Wartenburg was the great great grandson of Hans David Ludwig Yorck von Wartenburg, a noted Prussian general during the Napoleonic Wars.

Yorck von Wartenburg studied law and political science at Bonn and Breslau universities, and joined the civil service working in Breslau and Berlin. In 1939 he joined the army, seeing front line service in the Polish campaign. He was soon back in administration however, working in the Military Economy Office

of the War Office in Bendlerstrasse, Berlin.

A man of strong religious conviction, Yorck totally rejected National Socialism, believing that its claim to absolute sovereignty left no place for God. He also found Nazi racism and expansionism distasteful.

With fellow-aristocrat Helmuth James Graf von Moltke, he was one of the founders of the Kreisau Circle, and became an active member of the Opposition. From 1943 he met regularly with his cousin, Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, and was one of the planners of the bomb attempt on Hitler's life,

which failed on 20 July 1944. The Prussian aristocrat was one of the first conspirators to be arrested, and was tried in the *Volksgericht* or People's Court. Yorck von Wartenburg was executed on 8 August 1944 at Plötzensee prison, Berlin.

Right: Peter, Count Yorck von Wartenburg, came from a distinguished Prussian military family. His religious beliefs brought him into opposition with the Nazis, and he was to pay the price for that opposition with his life.

**See also Inside the Third Reich
Issue 20: Opposition to Hitler**



Young German Order

The *Jungdeutscher Orden* or *Jungdo* was founded by Arthur Mahraun in 1920. Rooted in the youth movements of the beginning of the century, the *Jungdo* was modelled on the medieval Teutonic order – the leader was entitled 'Grand Master', regional units were known as 'Commanderies' and local organisations were known as 'Brotherhoods'.

As with all the organisations inspired by the pre-WWI *Wandervogel* movement, the Young German Order made much of group hiking trips through the German countryside. It also also tried to instil in its young members the sense of brotherhood described by *Fronterlebnis* writers.

Most 'brothers' were middle class, who rejected capitalist

society and Weimar. They had the romantic dream of setting up a pastoral *Volksisch* community. Their view was similar in some ways to the socialist wing of the Nazis, and the Order supported the Führer in the late 1920s. However the *Jungdo's* attitude to the outside world was a source of friction. The group's newspaper, the *Jungdeutsche*, advocated international

reconciliation, especially with France, and differences with the Nazis led to the Order becoming allied with the German Democratic Party. Refusal to toe the Nazi Party line led to the Young German Order being banned in 1933.

**See also Inside the Third Reich
Issue 12: Nazis and Youth**

Young Plan

The Young Plan was the second major attempt to resolve the problems caused by the high level of reparations payments imposed on Germany after World War I. The Weimar Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, was anxious to make a settlement before the 1928-29 annual annuity payment, agreed in 1924 under the Dawes Plan, fell due. To assist this process, a series of conferences were convened in Paris and the Hague in 1929. A committee headed by the American financier Owen D. Young formulated a series of recommendations. These included a fixed capital value of

reparations of \$8 billion payable in 58 annual instalments, the last to be made in 1988, and the provision for a Bank of International Settlements (BIS) to handle payments.

The Nazis, who asserted that the accusation of 'war guilt' was a lie, opposed the Young Plan. However even though Dr Hjalmar Schacht resigned his position as head of the Reichsbank in protest on March 13, 1930 President Paul von Hindenburg signed the bill. In part, the Germans accepted the terms because it was the only way the Allies would lift their controls over the German

economy. However, because of the depression Germany had to suspend its first payments in 1931, and the Plan was cancelled in 1932.

Hitler and the National Socialists used their opposition to the Plan to build a much higher profile all over Germany, and they used the publicity thus generated to promote their own plans for national recovery.

Right: The Young Plan was meant to ease reparation payments demanded at Versailles. However, the Great Depression hit Germany hard, and Nazi opposition to the plan meant that they gained many converts from among the jobless.



Yugoslavia

Scene of some of the most brutal fighting of the war, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia came into existence in 1918. Incorporating the kingdoms of Serbia, Montenegro and parts of the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, it had an uneasy existence due to ethnic tensions. In the 1920s Yugoslavia was allied to France, but fears over Mussolini's expansionist aims led to greater contacts with Germany, and increasing dependence on German trade. Although declared a neutral at the start of World War II, Yugoslavia joined the Tripartite pact with Germany, Italy and Japan in March 1941. Two days later the government was overthrown by an anti-German military putsch. The Wehrmacht invaded on 6 April, and four days later the Croats declared their independence. The Croat Puppet State was heavily involved in the

bitter partisan war which erupted, as were large numbers of German troops. In the fierce, multi-sided war that followed, Croat fought Serb, Communist fought Royalist, and Muslim fought Christian. The Croatian *Ustase* killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Roma and Jews, running a concentration system every bit as harsh as their German mentors. After the war the country was reunited under partisan leader Joseph Tito, but with his death the unresolved ethnic tensions lead to the break up of the country in the 1990s.

Right: Serbian members of the Yugoslav army go into German captivity. Local ethnic tensions added to the ferocity of the vicious partisan war which erupted in the occupied Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 6: The Balkans



Zeitzler, Kurt (1895 - 1963)

Born on June 9, 1895 at Cossmar-Luckau, Kurt Zeitzler entered the Army as an officer at the start of the First World War. In spite of his youth, he rose to command the 72nd Infantry Regiment. Nicknamed *Kugelblitz* - Thunderball - he remained in the *Reichswehr* between the wars, where he was one of Hitler's earliest supporters.

Promoted Colonel in 1939, he briefly commanded a regiment before becoming Chief-of-Staff of the XXII Army Corps. From March 1940 he was Chief-of-Staff of Panzer Group A, going on to Rundstedt's Army Group D as a *Generalmajor* in April 1942. He organised the defeat of the

Dieppe landings in August 1942, and was promoted to *Generalleutnant* and Chief-of-Staff of the Army in September of that year. He was made a *Generaloberst* soon afterwards, reaching the army's second-highest rank from Colonel in only six months. A talented staff officer, Zeitzler was a favourite of Hitler and was promoted over the heads of more senior officers.

He held this post until the Bomb Plot in June 1944. He did his best to convince Hitler that the German position on the Eastern Front was precarious and it was necessary to withdraw to stronger positions.

Hitler refused to accept this and Zeitzler, realising the futility of his position, adopted a novel form of resistance. He reported sick and ceased to carry out his duties. He was relieved in July 1944 and was dismissed from the Army on January 31, 1945. Captured by the British, he was released from captivity in 1947. Zeitzler died at Hohenaschau in Upper Bavaria.

Right: Nicknamed the 'Ball of Fire', Kurt Zeitzler was a tough, courageous soldier. Although an excellent staff officer, he lacked the gift for high command, and his rapid rise through the ranks was primarily through the Führer's favour and not by merit.



Zhitomir

Administrative centre of the Zhitomir Oblast, in the Ukraine, Zhitomir is one of the oldest cities in Russia. Home to a large Jewish community for several centuries, it housed a well-respected rabbinical college as well as one of the first Hebrew printing presses. In the 1930s, a third of the city's population of 95,000 was Jewish.

In June 1941, Zhitomir lay in the path of Field Marshal von Rundstedt's Army Group South, and on 9 July von Kleist's First Panzer Group reached the city. By this time, many of Zhitomir's Jews had fled eastwards, but some 10,000 remained.

Over the next two months

5,000 Jews were killed under various pretexts, and the survivors were forced into a ghetto. On 18 September, the military administration convened a meeting with the city council and with *Einsatzkommando* 4a, part of *Einsatzgruppe* C, where it was decided that "The Jews of Zhitomir must be liquidated completely." The next day, the the German army and Ukrainian police units cleared the ghetto. The Jews were force-marched ten kilometres along the Novgorod road, to where the *Einsatzkommando* waited. All were shot, and buried in six mass graves - some of which

held the remains of earlier victims taken from the city. The Red Army liberated Zhitomir on 31 December 1943, and a war crimes investigation found 9,263 victims in the mass graves.

Right: A German 105-mm gun fires through the streets of Zhitomir as von Kleist's Panzers enter Zhitomir in July 1941. It took very little time for the occupiers to begin separating out the Jewish population, and within weeks most were dead.

See also The Holocaust
Issue 3: Einsatzgruppen
See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 11: Barbarossa



Zhukov, Georgi Konstantinovich (1896-1974)

Marshal of the Soviet Union and one of the greatest generals of the war, Georgi Zhukov was one of the Third Reich's bogeymen. He was responsible for stopping Germany's advance into Russia and for directing the offensive which started at Stalingrad and ended in Berlin. Born a peasant and trained from the age of 10 as a furrier, Zhukov joined the army in 1915 and distinguished himself as a junior cavalry officer. He joined the Communist party in 1919, and rose to command a cavalry regiment by the end of the Civil War. Largely self-educated, he was heavily involved in the mechanisation of the Red Army, and narrowly escaped with his life in the purges of the Army in the late

1930s. In 1939 he led the Soviet forces in the successful border war against Japan. In 1941 he directed defence of Moscow, throwing the Wehrmacht back from the gates of the capital.

As Stalin's military deputy he oversaw the counterattack which sealed the fate of the German 6th Army at Stalingrad, and in July 1943 he was one of the chief planners of the Kursk counter-offensive. In 1944 he planned the destruction of Army Group Centre, and in 1945 commanded one prong of the final offensive against Berlin (though Stalin, ever mindful of the danger of successful generals, also encouraged an attack by Zhukov's rival Marshal Konev). After the war Zhukov

narrowly survived being eliminated by Stalin's secret police chief Beria, and went into virtual exile. After Stalin's death he became defence minister under Khrushchev, but was again removed from office in 1957. He died in 1974 and was buried with full honours in the Kremlin wall.

Right: Born a peasant in Tsarist Russia, Georgi Zhukov was one of the greatest military commanders in history. Stalin did not trust really able generals, but he needed Zhukov. Ordinary Soviet soldiers had a saying about the operational head of the Red Army: "Where Zhukov is, there is victory."

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 19: The End of Blitzkrieg



Ziegler, Adolf (1892-1959)

One of the most influential painters in the Third Reich, Adolf Ziegler was born in Bremen. He first became known as "a meticulous copier of Dutch flower-pieces", but later went on to specialise in allegorical female nudes, painted in a naturalistic, classical style. Since this was very much to Hitler's taste, the pair got on famously when they met in 1925. When Hitler came to power, he encouraged the Party to commission nudes and portraits from the artist, and in 1936 appointed Ziegler to the

Presidency of the *Reichskammer der bildenden Künste*, or Reich Chamber of Fine Art. With the Führer's backing he 'cleansed' German galleries of 'Degenerate' art. He headed a four-man tribunal which also included the Nazi cartoonist Schweitzer-Mjölner, Count Baudissin and art critic Wolf Willrich. Between them, the four men condemned work by Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso, Gauguin, van Gogh, Braque and Pissarro, as well as works by leading German artists like Emil Nolde, Oskar Kokoschka and

Georg Grosz. Known as the 'Reich Master of the Pubic Hair,' Ziegler continued to paint his competent but uninspired nudes to the end of the war, and examples decorated the Reich Chancellery.

Right: Adolf Ziegler's main effect on the art world was not as a painter, but as a functionary. He scoured the Third Reich for work which offended Nazi notions of art, and then destroyed large numbers of modern masterpieces.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 6: Art in the Third Reich



Ziegenberg

Ziegenberg was one of several headquarters bunker complexes built to allow Adolf Hitler to control the war. Constructed in 1939 under the direction of Albert Speer, Ziegenberg was intended for use in operations in the west. It was located at the end of a grassy valley near Bad Nauheim, Hesse, an area that had been a manorial estate in Goethe's time. Even though millions of Reichsmarks had been invested in the construction work, the headquarters in the Taunus range of hills was not used in *Fall Gelb*,

the invasion of France and the Low Countries which took place in 1940. Hitler felt it was too luxurious. Four years later, however, the Führer had no such qualms, and in December 1944 he moved from the *Wolfsschanze* in the east and occupied the Ziegenberg HQ. It was from here that he watched the abortive Ardennes campaign in Belgium. Designed to force a wedge between the Allied armies in the West, it was Germany's last great offensive, and squandered forces which might have held the

advancing Red Army for several months. After the failure of the offensive Hitler moved back to Prussia, and from there to his final HQ, the bunker under the Chancellery in Berlin.

Right: Hitler acknowledges the plaudits of the German people after the defeat of France. He was supposed to have occupied one of the half-dozen or so military headquarters which had been built all over the Reich, but in 1940 he rejected the Albert Speer designed complex at Ziegenberg as being not military enough.



Zinsknechtschaft - Interest Slavery

An economic theory advanced by Gottfried Feder. Feder, a civil engineer by training, was influential in the development of the economic theories of the German Workers' Party, which he had joined even before Hitler. According to Feder the breaking

of interest slavery was a prime requirement for the future Germany. The Nazis saw Jewish financiers as the most ruthless exponents of *Zinsknechtschaft*.

Feder explained that: "The demand for breaking of interest-slavery is of such

gigantic proportions, of such fundamental importance for our nation, for our race, that the re-birth of our nation out of the depths of slavery and shame is dependent upon the solution of the problem. Indeed the happiness, prosperity and

civilisation of the world is dependent on it". Feder and his ideas lost influence with the elimination of Strasser's radical socialist wing of the NSDAP, and they became particularly unwelcome as Hitler courted German business and industry.

A Z OF THE THIRD REICH

Zionism

Zionism originated in the 19th Century, although the roots of the yearning for Zion, or Jerusalem, date back to the diaspora in Roman times which scattered a large proportion of the Jewish people into exile.

The aim of the Zionists was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the historic Israel. Brought into existence by the general rise of nationalism and by a wave of anti-Semitism which swept through Europe in the second half of the century, Zionism differed from other nationalist movements in its international nature, which became evident with the establishment of the World Jewish congress and of several international conferences.

Although the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* – ZVfD or German Zionist Federation – was set up in 1897, it had little influence among the largely assimilated German Jews until the Nazi seizure of power. After 1933, the Nazi desire to rid Germany of Jews and the Zionist dream of a homeland in Palestine saw the two diametrically groups working to the same end. The Nazis encouraged the ZVfD to promote emigration as a means of escape, and even made it easy for Zionist leaders to get into and out of the country.

Even though all Jewish organisations were dissolved in 1938 after *Kristallnacht*, the SS continued to encourage



clandestine Jewish emigration to Palestine, and the Zionists became active in providing vocational training for Jewish youths. Emigration was still possible until 1941, when the Nazis came up with a new solution to the Jewish Question: a 'Final' Solution.

Above: A Romanian Zionist group helps to take in the harvest before the outbreak of war. Zionism combined the secular nationalism of the 19th Century with traditional religious beliefs. Young Zionists were instrumental in setting up agricultural settlements in Palestine, which were to evolve into the kibbutz movement.

Zossen

German military planners began contemplating the next European war almost as soon as the Armistice to end the Great War was signed, and in the 1930s set up a new command facility to be occupied in time of war. Zossen, about 40km south of Berlin, was ideal. The military had been in the region since 1871, when the Prussian General Staff had set up the artillery range at Kummersdorf. At the turn of the century the Kaiser's army created a major barracks complex and training area centred on the villages of Zossen and Wunsdorf. During World War I Zossen was used as a prison camp for Russian prisoners of war.

Military occupation of the site continued under the Weimar

Republic and in the 1930s Zossen was chosen to house the General Staff. With the outbreak of war, the *Oberkommando des Heeres* – Army High Command moved to prepared locations at Zossen, code-named Maybach I and Maybach II.

An abortive attempt to overthrow Hitler by Generals became known as the 'Zossen Putsch'. After the triumph in Poland many generals thought that there would be a political resolution with the West. However when it became clear that Hitler planned a major offensive against France and Britain, a plot to remove him from power was mooted. Hitler's denigration of Army commander von Brauchitsch, and his talk of

"killing without mercy all men, women and children of Polish race and language," convinced the generals that they must act. However, a reluctance to break their vows of loyalty led to a collapse of the plot. And when the Wehrmacht was triumphant in the West in 1940, plans to oust Hitler were forgotten.

Zossen was captured by Soviet armoured forces on 21 April 1945. In the words of Professor John Erickson, the tank troops of Marshal Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front "stumbled on an underground world of bewildering complexity". The Soviets used the complex as a major headquarters after the German surrender and all through the Cold War.



Above: On the outbreak of war the OKH moved from the Defence Ministry in Berlin to Zossen. Here, General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff, briefs Field Marshal Walther Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the Army.

Zyklon-B

Zyklon-B was the trade name of a poison gas manufactured by the Tesch und Stabenow company of Hamburg and the Degesch concern of Frankfurt am Main. Both companies were members of the IG Farben combine. The material was a by-product of the dyestuffs industry, and was formed by extracting highly toxic chemicals naturally present in tiny amounts in almonds and other vegetable substances.

Originally developed as a pesticide to kill vermin in enclosed areas like warehouses and the holds of cargo ships, it was also lethal to humans, and was used by the SS in the mass murder of Jews and others in the extermination camps.

Zyklon-B came as blue crystals formed by absorbing the toxins in siliceous earth, and in its original form as a safety measure incorporated a trace element that had a distinctive smell. The contracts placed by the SS with IG Farben specified that this should be removed in the stocks supplied to the death camps. When the crystals were exposed to moisture in the air they turned into hydrocyanic or Prussic acid fumes.

On being inhaled, the cyanide attached to the haemoglobin in the blood, blocking out the natural oxygen and asphyxiating the victim. In the gas chambers of Auschwitz, one or two tins took between five and 15 minutes to kill 250 victims.



Above: The actual work of delivering the Zyklon-B into the gas chamber was carried out by an SS man with the title Sanitätsdienstgefreiter – SDG or Deputy Health Service Corporal.

See also The Holocaust
Issue 2: The Body Factory
See also Nazi Horrors
Issue 18: Camp Commanders

COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler's Table-talk
Years of Triumph



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Atlantic Wall
Pzkw V Panther
Heinkel He 111



INSIDE THE REICH

Corruption
Women in the Reich
The Volkssturm



HITLER'S BATTLES

Rhine Crossings
Eastern Front 1945
Battle for Berlin

NAZI SYMBOLS

Party membership badges
Foreign Nazis



IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**



NAZI SYMBOLS

Hitler knew the value of publicity. Newspapers, especially the Party's own *Völkischer Beobachter*, were vital tools in his rise to power. Once in the driving seat, he quickly set about changing all of Germany's press to fit the Nazi mould.

HITLER'S BATTLES

Hitler's last gamble saw the cream of Germany's armed forces thrown against the Allies in the Ardennes. It was a gamble which was doomed to fail.

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler and Churchill were united in only one thing: they hated each other. The personal element in the struggle which began in 1940 was only resolved with the Allied triumph in 1945.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Though Hitler's message echoed the anti-Semitism and the *völkisch* sentiments of many German Churchmen, the Nazis viewed established religion as an anachronism which undermined the true Aryan spirit.



WAR MACHINE

The struggle to rule the night skies over the Reich was the world's first all-out electronic conflict. Even though the British were eventually to win, the Luftwaffe's *nachtexperten* nearly forced the RAF out of the war.